

Christianity and the Law of God



Examining the question:

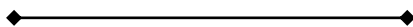
“What is the Value of the Old Testament Law of God
in the Life of the Present Day Believer
in Jesus Christ?”

[Taken from “The Sermon on the Mount” series 2020]



Jesus Christ
our highest calling,
our greatest purpose,
our soul's source and joy,
and our all-consuming passion.

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Introduction

As we begin: Here is the summary of the main points of this booklet.

- 1)** The OT Law is the Foundation for our NT and the NT is the Fulfillment for our OT Foundation. Each is individually unique, yet each is actually dependent upon the other, and are intended to be inseparable.
- 2)** The OT Law of God *presents* God's dealings with His people. Through it, we understand how things are intended to operate in God's Kingdom of Heaven and how we are to live as citizens of that Kingdom.
- 3)** The OT Law *establishes* the Standard of God's Righteousness and declares the absolute authority of God, as King of His eternal Kingdom.
- 4)** The OT Law *exalts* the Essence of God's holiness.
- 5)** The OT Law of God *illuminates* the unrighteousness of mankind.
- 6)** The OT Law *convicts* us of our need of a Savior and converts the heart
- 7)** The Law of God *directs* us to the coming Messiah.
- 8)** The OT Law is our *instruction* for worshipping God and gaining Wisdom for every area of human life.
- 9)** The OT Law *anticipates* God's calendar for the future, and reminds us of our past.
- 10)** The OT Law celebrates and magnifies the grace of God and drives us to humbly and gratefully, seek righteousness outside of ourselves.

Apart from the issue of the gospel message itself, one of the most crucial questions of our day, for the world and for the Church; at least for the

church in America is the value and place of the Old Testament Law of God today.

What we cover in this series is controversial and may ultimately result in divisions. But Unity at the cost of Truth, is not Biblical Unity. I believe we need not shrink back from discussing this, uncovering the danger attempt to present a balanced, God honoring perspective on the whole of Scripture.

The references made in these messages are not intended to point out or to condemn others as inferior, but we do intend to inform the church of this all important issue and attempt to offer a Biblically based presentation to be considered and understood by all.

Our question to answer and goal to understand is this:

**“What is the Value of the Old Testament Law of God,
in the Life of the Present Day believer in Jesus Christ?”**

God’s blessings
Jeff Wilson

SERIES: Sermon on the Mount: “the Narrow Way” June 14a, 2020

Sermon Title: “**Law & Order**” :

Key Word: “**Expectations**”

Text: Mat.5:17-20 | 2 Cor.4:1-10



Subj: What part does our OT law play in the life of present day, Born again Christians?

Mat 5:17-20 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away [Mat.24:35/2Pet.3:7] not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

REVIEW:

Sermon on the mount: (1) We began with the Beattitudes with a focus on the present blessedness of all citizens of God’s Kingdom of Heaven, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Our key word was “**Blessedness**”.

(2) Then with salt and light, we considered our Witness and our Testimony as part of our Christian influence to the world around us. Our key word was “**Responsibility**”.

Today, Jesus focuses our attention on the Law of God as God’s standard for His Kingdom of Heaven. This reveals God’s expectation upon His people as we travel the troublesome path and live the journey in the Kingdom of Heaven. Our key word is “**Expectations**”.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LAW OF GOD

The question we’ll address throughout this section is, “What is the value of the OT law, in the life of the present day believing Christian?” So when Jesus is teaching through the Sermon on the Mount, as we read Matthew 5, it looks like Jesus is just going from topic to topic, as they are seemingly unrelated.

But if we glance back at Luke 6, we see that Mat.5 and Lu.6 compliment one another. Luke sheds some light on the progression of these topics. In Luke 6:1-2, Jesus and his disciples are walking through a grain field on the Sabbath and they stop to take some of the heads of grain, rub them together to separate the fruit from the husks and then eat it. Then the religious leaders become upset with Jesus and his followers for gathering grain and breaking the Sabbath.

Then in Luk.6:6, Jesus healed a man with a withered hand. At which time the religious leaders became furious with Jesus over his perceived breaking of the Jewish Law. And Jesus answered their accusations: “Is it lawful to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath? Or is it legal to save life or to destroy it?”

With this in the immediate context of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus brings up this issue of the Law.

Mat 5:17-20 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away [Mat.24:35/2Pet.3:7] not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished..

**** Our OT / Jewish Tanakh**

* Judaism is the foundation for the Christian faith.

* Christian faith is the fulfillment of the Jewish faith.

* Jewish Tanakh =
Christian Old Testament

* The OT - Compliments the NT

* The NT – Completes the OT
(Testament or Covenant)

The Value of the Old Testament Law



Covenant is the promise of God to His people to bring about an intended end. When we think of the Law, in Jesus day, this is what they would have been contending with.

THE JEWISH LAW

- 1) **1st Law** – Gen.2:17 (In the Garden of Eden)
- 2) **10 Commandments** – Ex.20 @ Mt Sinai - **Torah**
- 3) **Pentateuch** – Gen-Deut / 1st 5 books / “*Books of Moses*” / **Torah**
- 4) **Tanakh** – Entire Jewish holy book – **Torah** (Our Christian OT)
- 5) **Rabbinical “Law”** – running commentary of Oral Teachings from the Jewish Religious leaders passed down through generations. Eventually written down and compiled after 70ad, the destruction of the temple. On issues of the 10 commandments, culture, philosophy, customs, festivals, a wide variety of Jewish practices of their day. (*A little like the decrees of the Pope. Became equivalent to written law. Accuracy was dependent upon the memory of those who passed them on*)
- 6) **Halakhah** – additional Jewish “law” (Lit. “the path one walks” dealing with customs, decrees, clarifications / ¹Idols, ²Courts of justice, ³sexual sin, ⁴eating meat, etc.
- 7) **Talmud** (70/200AD)– taken from oral traditions, focused on the studies and clarifications upon the Torah “*Talmud’s inspiration outweighs the Scriptures in sanctity and authority. Scripture is the water; the Talmud is the wine*” (*Mishna, Midrash, Mitzvot*)

The Law of God was under attack in Jesus day, not from the world around them, but from their own Jewish leaders.

**“Whenever the Word of God is added to,
the Authority of Scripture is taken away.”**

In Jesus day the Word of God was under attack.

For us Today - The Holy word of God – that is, our inerrant, infallible, fully Inspired and authoritative Bible from Almighty God - is under heavy, heavy adversarial attack. In my opinion, it is not coming from any secular government, not from any political party; not from any pagan organization that promotes abortion, violence, racism or doubt. The Holy Word of God, our Bible, is under nuclear level attack in our culture today, by churches, or **pastors** of churches; many who claim to be evangelicals, as we are - who are seemingly attempting to present themselves as relevant and the church and the Bible as fresh and up to date, as relevant – as they are trying to reach an unbelieving, dark, sinful, unredeemed world, that presently doesn't believe the Bible.

Evangelical pastors who have verbally left the faith they had been preaching, promoting and over emphasizing that God is love and no loving God would send anyone to hell. Pastors, Youth pastors, Christian musicians and more. But that which makes me tremble, is not that an unbelieving world is becoming more unbelieving, but that supposedly solid, evangelical pastors or leaders are declaring their faith no longer exists or that the Old Testament is no longer of value and Christians should forget about the OT law of God as it is “old” and irrelevant.

Q: Are Christians under law or under Grace? What does it mean to be “under the law”? Are we Under the curse of the law? Are we Under the obligation of the law? Are we Under the condemnation or the guilt of the law? Are we Under the law of Christ? (1 Cor 9:21). Are we under the Royal Law of Love? (Jas.2:8). Love God (Mat.22:37); Are we under the perfect Law of Liberty? (James 1:25; 2:12)

Q: Are we Living by obeying the Law, so as to achieve eternal salvation?
NO

So then: **“What is the value of the law of God, in the life of the believer in Christ?”**

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|--|
| <p>Psa 19:7 ESV The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;</p> |
|--|

Is it any wonder why Satan would want to destroy the foundation of the Christian faith. And as we go through these points on the Law, hopefully we will realize, No Wonder the Word of God and the OT is under attack as irrelevant, old, full of God's hatred and violence.

ENDING: What is the value of the Law of God in the life of the believing Christian?

2Tim. 3:16-17 ESV All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

All Scripture = At this point it would have been the OT Law.

Inspired = God breathed; from God's heart and mind to ours / thoughts desires , intent

Useful for: (i.) Teaching: doctrine: Do this or believe this.

(ii.) Rebuking: Don't do that or believe that.

(iii.) Correction: Do this or believe this instead;

(iv.) Preparing: changing, instruction for the purpose of developing personal righteousness./ life change.

If Satan can deceive us into discounting or devaluing any part of God's holy Word, how great a victory he will have won. We must never discard, or diminish the value or authority of God's holy Word.

SERIES: Sermon on the Mount: “the Narrow Way” June 21 & 28, 2020

Sermon Title: “**Christians and the Law**”, pt.1

Key Word: “ ”

Text: Mat.5:17-20 | 2 Cor.4:1-10 | Light; direction



Subj: What part does our OT play in the life of Born again Christians?

Mat 5:17-20 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away [Mat.24:35/2Pet.3:7] not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

REVIEW: (1) Judaism & Christianity
(2) Law: 10 Commands, Gen-Deut, & All Jewish holy book. (3) The whole

of the Jewi

Christian Faith is the fulfillment of the Jewish faith

Love the Lord your God... (Mat.22:37)
Greatest Command

Love your neighbor (Mat.22:39)
The Second like it

Fulfill the

Royal Law

James 2:8

GOD

- 1: Do not worship any other gods
- 2: Do not make any idols
- 3: Do not misuse the name of God
- 4: Keep the Sabbath holy

MAN

- 5: Honour your father & mother
- 6: Do not murder
- 7: Do not commit adultery
- 8: Do not steal
- 9: Do not lie
- 10: Do not covet

THE GOLDEN RULE

"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

—Mat 7:12

Jewish Faith is the foundation of the Christian Faith

Also, notice how the NT refers to the Importance of the OT Law.

Mat 22:36-40 (36) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" (37) And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (38) This is the great and first commandment. (39) And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (40) **On these two commandments hang all**

the Law and the Prophets."

In other words, the OT Law of God, represented here with the 10 commandments; all hang on to those 2 NT commands to Love God – Commands 1-4, and to Love others: Commands 6-10.

Then when we read the Golden Rule , which states:

Mat 7:12 ESV "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, **for this is the Law and the Prophets.**

Or “this single principle sums up *all* the Law and the prophets”. So nowhere does the NT devalue or end the OT, but the OT is the foundation for the NT and the NT is the fulfillment of the OT Law of God.

Q: “So What is the value of the OT law of God, in the life of the present day believer in Jesus Christ?”

About 2 years ago, a friend of mind was debating a fellow belonging to the “Hebrew Roots” religion and it was live streamed and recorded. In that debate, My friend supported the position that Christians are not “Under the Law” but “under grace”; and that we are not held to the law of Moses or OT law. The other fellow argued that both Old and New Testament believers in God and followers of Jesus, are obligated to keep the OT Law; the Jewish customs, practices, commandments, activities, festivals and celebrations, rites and rituals.

After the debate, I connected with my friend and told him he made a great presentation and didn’t get rattled by his opponent. But his position really troubled me and I asked him: “If as Christians we are not under the Law and are not meant to keep the law of God, then “**What is the value of the OT law of God, in the life of the present day believer in Christ?**”_To which my friend answered: **“Well that’s a good question. I’m sure glad they didn’t ask me that during the debate.”**

The Take Home Principle for us today regarding the Old Testament Law

of God – and this is so important, as this seems to be what we may be missing – is that: **“The OT Law of God is not merely about what God expects from us, but also about what we can expect from God”.**

The Law of God has always been focused on this: God is our Source and His Word is our Standard. We hear “Law” and we probably think: Hindrance, restraint, bondage, restrictions, what are we to do or say; what are we not to do or to say. We may even refer to the Law of God as “legalism”.

Jdg 17:6 KJV In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

All instruction from God is viewed interchangeably with His **Word**. Please take a pencil and circle these words.

Psa 119:9-18 BETH. (9) How shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed according to your **word**. (10) With my whole heart have I sought You: O let me not wander from your **commandments**. (11) your **word** have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against You. (12) Blessed ae You, O LORD: teach me your **statutes**. (13) With my lips have I declared all the **judgments** of your mouth. (14) I have rejoiced in the way of your **testimonies**, as much as in all riches. (15) I will meditate in your **precepts**, and have respect unto your **ways**. (16) I will delight myself in your **statutes**: I will not forget your **word**. (17) Gimel. Deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your **word**. (18) Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things from your **law**.

You see, the Word of God is synonymous with the Law of God. All the word of God is ***Inspired***, in that all of the Bible is God breathed, from the heart and mind of God. All of the Bible is also ***Inerrant***, in that there are no errors in its transmission from God’s heart and mind, to us, through the human authors of the day, as they were originally written down (the Autographs). And all the Bible is ***Infallible***, in that there are no inaccuracies in the content of the Bible, as it refers to events, places, people etc.

Each and everyone of those words we just circled in the Ps.119 passage, refers to the fully Inspired, Inerrant, Infallible and Authoritative, holy word of God, including the Old Testament.

Q: “So What is the value of the OT law of God, in the life of the present day believer in Jesus Christ?”

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE TRUE BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?

- In the OT the law of God is synonymous with His Word.
- In the NT the word of God is Truth.
- The OT Law is God’s Standard and Expectations for His People

THE LAW OF GOD PRESENTS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE:

The Law of God presents examples of how God dealt with His people. The Law of God also presents examples of the propensity of God’s people to rebel against God and the literal, historical value of the OT Law of God must not be underestimated or deminished in its value.

1Cor. 10:11 ESV Now *these things* happened to them as an example, but they were written down for *our* instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.

“**these things**” being references to things in the OT. And “**Our**” refers to the NT believers and us who are reading it today. God’s word is Truth. The Law of God’s OT instructs us in how to worship God acceptably. It teaches us how to treat our fellow man. The Bible addresses relationship with God and our relationship with others; what God expects from us and what we can expect from God.

In 1 Cor.10, Paul recounts the story of the Hebrew children in the wilderness. “under the cloud of God”. He recounts their enjoying God’s provision of physical, as well as spiritual food. He speaks about their sexual immoralities and their idolatries. At one point they were overthrown in the wilderness; they were consumed by serpents.

Take your pencils again and mark this as we read.

1Cor. 10:6 ESV Now these things, took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

Here's the Lesson for us: These things were the writings of the OT Law of God, documenting God's dealings with His people. In v.6, it states, "these things" refer to the OT events as examples for "us", referring to the NT believers at the time. Then in v.11, "our instruction" again referring to NT believers receiving valuable instruction and life principles from the OT Law of God.

So What was the purpose in "these things" being written? As examples for all of us as we read these historical accounts. And what was the value or purpose in us reading and learning from those examples?

They were as WARNINGS – "That we", believers in Jesus in 2020, "might not desire or lust after evil as they did."

Rom 15:4 ESV For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

"Whatever was written" is all of our Old Testament Scriptures. What was the purpose stated here? That through the encouragement of these OT Scriptures, we might have HOPE. If Satan can just get the church today, to discount or minimize the value of the OT Law of God for the Believing Christian today; Oh, what a victory He will have won!!"

Question: Are those lessons from those examples ever worth devaluing? No. Being reminded of their history doesn't celebrate their history, but it is a modern day warning to never again repeat those things in our day.

1) The OT Law of God presents the relationship between God and His People. It helps us know what God expects from us, as well as us learning what we can expect from God. Praise God for our OT Law.

Hopefully the more we are thinking this way, and reading through the New Testament, we should begin to realize the value of the OT Law of God throughout the NT Scriptures. Also the OT Law helps us realize

how desperate we are for a Great Savior. Jesus, our Great Savior has provided for us, so Great a Salvation.

We are seeking to answer the question: **WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?**

As we think through this question, we must be aware that the Laws of God serve a dual purpose. First, the Greatest Law of NT Law is to love the Lord; that keeps us in right relationship with God Himself. The “Second” greatest NT Law is to love others. Lets apply that to our social laws today.

Lets consider the speed limit. (1) If we obey the speed limit, that keeps us in good standing with our government, as well as with our law enforcement. (2) But how does the speed limit help us in our relationships with others? GODS LAW: Love God and Love others. SOCIAL LAWS: Obey the Speed limit and stay in good standing with law enforcement, but what how does the speed limit affect our relationships with others? How are others affected when we obey the speed limit? When we obey the speed limit it helps us drive in a manner that helps keep others safe; thus affecting our relationships with others in society. So even in a secular society, our laws serve a dual purpose.

I have my own New Testament that I received when I was baptized in 1967. That was all I got. And this week I was wondering if, when people get a New Testament, for whatever reason, I wonder if they may get the impression that the OT is not important, or necessary?

Turn with me to Psalm chapter 1.

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| <p>Psa. 1:1-3 ESV (1) Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; (2) but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. (3) He is like a tree planted by streams of</p> |
|---|

water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

“Blessed is the man”: Here is a compelling beginning. Who is blessed and why? Notice the progression here; walking, standing and then sitting. The Blessed person does not allow him/herself to be negatively affected by ¹the wicked, ²the sinner or the ³mocker. They live apart from God, they are separated from life in God and they detest and disrespect anything from or about God; they mock Him and His word.

These are all described this way as they are all rejecting, at some level, the OT Law of God. They are contrasted with the “Blessed” man who delights (v2) in the Law of the Lord and thinks about it constantly. The key to the man being “blessed” is revealed in verse 3. “He will be like a tree planted by the water.’ He will always be refreshed, renewed, revived, nourished, satisfied, and rejuvenated. Even when scorching heat and lack of rains come, the man who values the OT Law of God, does not wither or is not overcome by any adverse circumstances, but that man or that woman will remain blessed of the Lord.

Oh how the evil one, would like to deceive us into thinking the OT Law is of little or no value to us today as New Testament Christians.

One of the first areas of value of the OT Law of God is:

Through God’s OT Law, the present day believer in Jesus Christ, finds examples, instruction, and warnings from the OT Law, regarding the relationship between God and His people. (1Cor. 10:6,11)

And our take home principle is: The OT Law of God does not only instruct us about what God expects from us, but also what we can expect from God.

Another value of the OT Law of God in the life of the Believing Christian...

THE OT LAW OF GOD EXALTS THE HOLINESS OF GOD
Ex.20;

When we hear the 10 Commandments what comes to mind? “Do this.” “Don’t do that”. Commands & Prohibitions -- Requirements & Restrictions.

But what if we viewed the 10 Commandments, not as pronouncements that restrict our freedom, but as statements which exalt the holiness of God, and are boundary markers for His people, that were intended to keep them and us, in right relationship with our Most Holy Creator. They would almost be like *cause and effect* kinds of warnings. The Law could be like a WARNING on the stove that says: “Don’t touch the stove top when it is red hot.” Or a label on an Ammonia bottle that reads: “Don’t drink contents, as it will kill you.” It’s a cause and effect kind of warning. Touch the cherry red stove top and you’re going to get burned. Drink Ammonia and you will likely die. And so God’s Law exalts the holiness of God as guidelines for how we might best relate to Him and live a meaningful life in His favor.

Gen 2:15-17 ESV (15) The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. (16) And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, (17) but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

So in Gen.2:17, God gives Adam this warning, and as we look at it, we can see a warning with a particular “Cause and Effect”. You can have anything in the garden but that one tree. If you eat from that one tree, you will die. Cause and Effect. A Warning – that is not focused on Prohibitions and Restrictions, but on exalting the holiness of God, and the result of His holiness being violated or transgressed by His creation. And we see our Main Idea --

“The OT Law of God does not only instruct us about what God expects from us, but also what we can expect from God.”

When riding in an F-16 fighter you look over and you see a big red button which says: “Whatever you do, Don’t push this button.” That is a

warning. And we all know the effect of pushing that button; you'd trigger the ejection seat.

Eze 43:6-8 ESV (6) by setting their threshold by my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them. They have *defiled my holy name* by their abominations that they have committed, so I have consumed them in my anger.

God has not minimized his standard for those under the New Covenant nor has he relaxed his holiness. The Inspiration and Authority of His holy Word still bring conviction of sin through the workings of the Holy Spirit.

If anything it is all the more strict. Jesus states: You have heard it said (in the law) you shall not commit adultery, but I say if you lust after a woman, you have committed adultery in your heart.(Mat.5:27-28). God is all the more strict towards those who are truly His and how we view the holiness of God, will determine our relationship with God.

Question: What if we discounted the OT Law? We would have no passages such as Ezekiel 43 which describes the holiness of God being defiled. We wouldn't have the Isaiah passage of Isaiah seeing into the throne room of heaven and seeing God, who was high and lifted up, and the angels crying Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God almighty, the whole earth is filled with His glory". We wouldn't have the book of Exodus with the 10 commandments which exalt the holiness of God and prescribes boundaries that will keep us from defiling his holiness and affecting our relationship with Him and resulting in damaging our relationships with others. We would also lose the book of Leviticus in which God gives many laws with which we learn of the holiness of God. We wouldn't have Jeremiah 2:3; Zech.14:20,21 where "Holiness to the Lord" is written on the people of Israel, upon the bridles and bells of the horses and upon the utensils for worship in the temple. If we devalue the OT Law, we would lose so much.

Isa 42:21 (ESV) The LORD was pleased; for his righteousness' sake, ¹to magnify his **Law** and ²to make it glorious.

*Justice is God enforcing His standard of Righteousness

Tony Evans put it this way:

“Righteousness is the moral standard of right and wrong to which God holds men accountable: based on His divine standard.

Justice is the equitable and impartial application of God’s moral law in society.” –Tony Evans (6/16/20)

So (1) Why would God magnify His OT Law and (2) why would He make the OT Law glorious? Because it is the Law of God that exalts the holiness of God! God magnifies His Law and glorifies His Law, because it is the Righteous standard of His law, which exalts His holiness, without which we – here in 2020- would have a very incomplete perception and shallow understanding of the holiness of God.

Question: So I ask you..

Q: Is the Law of God ever to be devalued or minimized? **NEVER.**

Q: Is the holiness of God ever to be devalued or minimized? Never. Never. Not in any dispensation. Not under any circumstances.

(1) So Not only does the OT Law of God present the relationship between God and His People:

(2) But also the OT Law of God exalts the holiness of God:

And our take home principle is: The OT Law of God does not only instruct us about what God expects from us, but also what we can expect from God.

CONCLUSION:

* Thank God today, for the great salvation we have and for our relationship with Him, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

** If you have been inclined to overlook, minimize or devalue the OT Law of God, begin to see the OT Law as the foundation of your own NT faith.

*** Read the OT with the purpose of learning from all its history and how God has dealt with His people.



SERIES: Sermon on the Mount: “the Narrow Way” July 5, 2020

Sermon Title: “**Christians and the Law**”, pt.2

Key Word: “ ”

Text: Mat.5:17-20 | 2 Cor.4:1-10 | Light; direction



Subj: What part does our OT play in the life of Born again Christians?

Mat 5:17-18 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

We are seeking to answer the question: **WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE PRESENT DAY BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?**

I believe we may be able to be more receptive to the answer to this question, if we remember the importance of our Foundation and its Fulfillment. (1) the OT Law of God is the FOUNDATION of the New Testament Faith. And the NT faith is the FULFILLMENT of the OT Law. (2) The Jewish faith is the Foundation to the Christian Faith and the Christian Faith is the Fulfillment of the Jewish faith. (3) the OT Law is not merely commandments on what God expects from us, but also information about what we can expect from God.

Oh how the evil one, would like to deceive us into thinking the OT Law is of little or no value to us today as New Testament Christians.

One of the first areas of value of the OT Law of God is:

1) The Law of God presents the relationship between God and His

People: Through God’s Law, the modern day believer in Jesus Christ, finds examples, instruction, and warnings from the OT Law, regarding the relationship between God and His people. (1Cor. 10:6,11)

Another value of the OT Law of God in the life of the Believing Christian...

2) The OT Law of God exalts the holiness of God: Ex.20;

What if we viewed the 10 Commandments as statements which exalt the

holiness of God, and as boundary markers for His people, that were intended to keep them and us, in right relationship with our Most Holy Creator; almost like *cause and effect* kinds of warnings.

[BEGIN July 5, 2020]

Mat 5:19-20 ESV (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

We must realize that Jesus is not requiring that we obey the Law better than the Scribes and Pharisees, but that we are better in recognizing our own sinfulness and then allowing God to address it.

A 3rd reason the OT Law is of value to us as present day believers in Jesus Christ:

1) THE OT LAW OF GOD ESTABLISHES GOD'S AUTHORITATIVE STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS:

Rom 8:3-4 ESV (3) For [God has done] what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. | By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, | (4) in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Question: What does God expect from us and what God require of all people? – *Righteousness*

Question: What can we expect from God? - To do what the Law could never do. To do for us what we could never do for ourselves. That is to provide a righteousness apart from the Law, through His Son, Jesus Christ. This is what we are all lacking and it was what the Pharisees and Scribes were lacking.

Psa 14:1-3 ESV To the choirmaster. Of David. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. (2) The LORD looks down from heaven

on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. (3) They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

It is interesting that when Paul quotes this in Romans 3:10, he substitutes “goodness” with “righteousness”; “There is none Righteous, no not one.”(Rom.3:23)

The Law doesn’t bring about righteousness, it never did. But it does point to and present the *Standard* of God’s righteousness, which is perfect. “**God did, what the Law could not do**”: The Law could not provide righteousness only direct us to it.

HOW did he do what he did? “**By sending His own Sons...**”; Jesus has done for us, what the Law of God could never do, nor was it ever intended to.

WHY did God send His only Son? “**In order that the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled in us**”.

Jesus said; “I came to fulfill the law...” (Mat.5:17). At His Baptism, Jesus said: “Thus it is fitting that we fulfill all Righteousness”. (Mat.3:15

The Law of God causes us to seek the Righteousness of God outside of ourselves, through God’s provision of Jesus Christ. That is what Abram did. Gen. 15:6 tells us that “Abram believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness”.

Remember: The “Law” is not just, ‘do this’, or ‘don’t do that’. It is not just orders, but the Law includes a mixture of commands, which are boundaries; promises, prophecies, history, guides for worship and prayer; and a variety of other elements.

Psa 119:106 ESV I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to **keep** your righteous rules.

“**Keep**” – is not a word for obedience; but lit. a hedge: protect, guard, preserve; observe; take heed; Highly value; David is not swearing to “obey” all God’s righteous rules. He is committing to build a hedge of

protection around all of God's Word, by the immense value he ascribes to God's Word.

Therefore, we must not minimize our Statements of faith, diminish our doctrinal positions, nor relax our Biblical convictions. We must never devalue the Old Testament Law of God, because ***the Law of God does not merely tell us what God expects from US, but also what we can expect from GOD.*** Through faith in Jesus Christ, the righteous requirement of God's law is fulfilled for us, by Jesus Christ.

Together with the New Testament, the Old Testament Law of God acts like a spiritual map; helping us to navigate the holiness of God, the sinfulness of the world and how to get to where He wants us to be.

And so we can be assured that: **The Law (Word of God) directs every believer in the paths of righteousness** for His name's sake. I don't recall who said it first, but this quote is true: "God's word always directs us in God's way". Today, as Christians the law of God does not condemn us, but guides us in the path of righteousness. If we sin, we read God's word or the Holy Spirit brings to mind our sin; we are convicted, that we might repent, confess and fellowship be renewed.

Psa 23:1-3 ESV A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (2) He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. (3) He restores my soul. He leads me **in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**

Remember: the OT Law of God exalts God's holiness; It presents God's dealings with His people and It establishes God's Standard of Righteousness and leads us in His path of Righteousness.

ILL) If we drive down the road going 55 mph and see a speed limit sign that says: "Speed Limit 55", we are not condemned by that sign or even convicted by it. But a constant reminder of how fast we are to drive and to keep that in mind. But if we are driving 65mph and see that sign, for the responsible driver, it should serve as conviction that we have transgressed the speed limit, and that we repent by immediately reducing our speed within the speed limit parameters.

Jesus fulfilled the law, not abolished it. He is the full keeping of the law, not the nullifying or bringing it to an end. He evidenced a life of full obedience. *In that he fulfilled the Law.* In Him, His righteous obedience, is applied to our own. *In that he fulfilled the Law.*

Fulfilled = “fully obeyed”; Also completed what the OT pointed to, to fulfill.

Q: Is God’s righteousness ever lessened, relaxed or diminished? *Never.* Therefore we have no reason to devalue or lessen the righteous standard of His Law of the OT scriptures.

The OT Law of God does not only instruct us about what God expects from us, but also what we can expect from God.

(1) So Not only does The Law of God present the relationship between God and His People:

(2) But also the Law of God exalts the holiness of God:

(3) Also, the Law of God establishes God’s Authoritative standard of Righteousness. So, together with the NT, the OT Law helps us navigate the holiness of God, the sinfulness of the world and where it is God wants us to be.

CONCLUSION:

(1) As you are reading through the Bible as many of you are; do so keeping an “eye out” for God’s righteous standard in the areas of my personal relationship with God or with others.

(2) Read the OT with an eye to recognize any specific area of unrighteousness in my life. Like the speed limit; you might read something and stop and think; “I don’t think that is addressing anything in my life right now.” And that’s good.

(3) But if it does address something in your life, be willing to repent from that, confess that as sin to God and ask God to refresh you with “clean hands, and a pure heart”. Be willing to pray: “God change this area of my life.”

SERIES: Sermon on the Mount: “the Narrow Way” **July 12, 2020**

Sermon Title: “The Reality of the Depravity of Humanity”

Text: Mat.5:17-20



Subj: What part does our OT play in the life of Born again Christians?

Mat 5:17-18 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Mat 5:19-20 ESV (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus gives 2 promises here: (1) The Law of God (i.e. OT Law) will not be abolished. (2) As long as there is heaven and earth, the OT Law will not be relaxed. (3) Those who loose, relax or minimize the Law and lead others to do the same, will be punished.

We are seeking to answer the question: **WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE PRESENT DAY BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?**

REVIEW:

So far the Law of: (1) God presents God’s dealings with His people in an historical context, as examples for us to read, learn from and hopefully not repeat. (2) The OT Law of God exalts the holiness of God. (3) The OT Law of God establishes God’s Authoritative standard of Righteousness:

Rom 8:3-4 ESV (3) For [**God has done**] what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. | By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, | (4) in order **that the**

righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Therefore, we must not minimize our Standards of faith, relax our doctrinal positions, nor soften our Biblical convictions. We must never devalue the Old Testament Law of God, because ***the Law of God does not merely tell us what God expects from US, but also what we can expect from GOD.*** Through faith in Jesus Christ, the righteous requirement of God's law is fulfilled for us, by Jesus Christ.

((The OT Law of God establishes God's Authoritative standard of Righteousness))

Today... Our focus is on "the Reality of the Depravity of Humanity"

1) WITH THAT STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE OT LAW OF GOD ILLUMINATES THE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF MANKIND

There are people today who believe that all people are basically good. And that people are merely a product of their environment or upbringing. And from the same reasoning, there are those who believe that humans are basically evil and sinful, and are not merely products of their environments, but are that way at the moment of their birth. Which would you say is true?

Isa 24:4-5 ESV The earth mourns and withers; the world languishes and withers; the highest people of the earth languish. (5) The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have *transgressed* the laws, *violated* the statutes, *broken* the everlasting covenant.

This is quite a convicting indictment against humanity in general.

Isa 59:1-2 ESV (1) Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; (2) but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

(1) We are guilty of sin. (2) Sin has separated us from God. As early as Genensis chapter 3, God reveals the Reality of the Depravity of Humanity and the sin that has caused us to be estranged from our Creator.

ILL) Imagine your sitting in a dark room. You are in your very comfy, easy chair, where you often nap. You are at peace. There is only harp music playing ever so softly. You feel comfortable, safe and at peace. Then someone turns on the light switch and you discover that there are hairy spiders the size of your hand, with toxic venom dripping from their man eating fangs, all over your body. Furthermore, the floor is covered with lively poisonous snakes; King Cobras, Diamond Back Rattlers, and Black Mambas. And you are suddenly horrified!

But, you were in that situation the whole time; for a while you were at peace, relaxed and very content. **What happened to change things?** Someone turned on the light and you realized the reality of your situation.

God's OT Law sheds light into our life and onto our lifestyle, if we allow it. We have to value the light. We have to acknowledge the light and its valuable purpose for the present day believer in Jesus.

That is what the Law of God does. Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. (Ps.119-105)

If we did not have the light of God's law or guidelines in scripture, we would not know of the holiness of God, nor would we be aware of our own sinful propensity to violate His holiness.

Rom 7:9-12 ESV I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. (10) The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. (11) For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. (12) So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

The light of the Word of God; the OT Law of God is Gods' standard of Righteousness and it illuminates the unrighteousness of all mankind.

Q: Should the Law or Scriptures that point out our sin, be removed so we will feel better about our situation? No. because It reveals *the Reality of the Depravity of Humanity* and without the OT Law, we would never realize the horrors of being separated from God. Let us thank God for His OT Law.

2) THE OT LAW CONVICTS OF OUR NEED OF A SAVIOR.

NT Scripture refers to the whole of Scripture as a “school master”, or a tutor and it teaches us of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man.

Gal 3:24 KJV Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

v.24, “...we are no longer under a schoolmaster”: This is particularly dealing with sin and salvation. After salvation, we need not be continually guided to Christ for salvation or repeated salvation; But we still are in desperate need of the written word of God.(2Tim.2:15; 3:16)

It is interesting when Paul writes to Timothy, who was Paul’s apprentice in the ministry, he makes these statements:

2Ti 3:14-15 ESV (14) But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it (15) and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Acts 16:1 describes Timothy as having a Greek Father and a Jewish Mother. He was raised and taught, the Hebrew Scriptures which not only made him wise in Biblical Truth, but also learned about Salvation through Jesus; From the OT. Jesus was not mentioned by name, but as God’s promised Messiah to take the sins of the world and provide forgiveness, salvation and eternal life.

Again we see the teachings from the Foundation of the OT, pointing toward the NT Fulfillment in the person of God’s only Son and our only Savior.

All the Law of God was to prepare the heart and point the way to the Messiah, Savior Jesus Christ. The OT looked forward to the Advent of God's Son, and the NT looks back onto the Truth and foundation of all God's promises and prophecies.

Q: So should the OT Law of God ever be relaxed, or devalued so as to remove its value of convicting the lost in their need for a Savior? NO.

(3) THE LAW OF GOD ALWAYS POINTS TO GOD'S MESSIAH

Act 28:23-24 ESV When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them **about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets**. (24) And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved.

Psalm 22 is referred to as a "Messianic" psalm; that is, it is prophetic in nature and describes the rejection of the Messiah in the NT.

If we read Isaiah 53, we read the foundational promises of the Savior, who would come and suffer (53:4-6). We would read of the Savior coming to bear our sins, in our place (v.4-6, 11).

And the OT Laws have present prophecies about Jesus the Messiah, that are yet to be fulfilled.

- Daniel 9:26ff.
- Zech.12:10; 14:1-5
- Micah 4:1-2

We must never allow the OT Law of God to be minimized, relaxed, loosened, discounted, or devalued in any way. It is full of meaning and hope and relevance for the present day believing Christian.

CONCLUSION:

Remember: The OT Law of God does not only instruct us about what God expects from us, but also what we can expect from God.

Strive to see God's OT Law for what it was meant to do for us. (1) A lesson of how God deals with His people. And (2) A reminder of Hope and Encouragement that we have, as citizens of God's Kingdom of Heaven, through faith in Jesus Christ. (3) the Exaltation of the holiness of God and His established Standard of righteousness.

How can we value the OT Law of God today?

(1) Read the Old Testament as a "Letter or Reconciliation". A Letter of Reconciliation is a document written from one person to another, with the purpose of expressing the wrongs done and offenses received in a relationship in which 2 people have become estranged. And the intent of that letter is the reconciliation of the offended parties.

The OT is not merely a bunch of "dos" and "don'ts", but God's expressed desire for his relationships with His people.

((“Return to me” –Mal.3:7))

(2) Also READ the OT as a "Declaration of Affection". IN His OT Law, the written Word of God; communicates God's love for the fallen, broken, sinful people he had created, and His desire to restore our relationship with Him.

Jere.31:3 – “I have loved you with an everlasting love.” In the OT Law, God reveals the Reality of the Depravity of Humanity and the steps God has taken so our relationship with Him can be made right. And its all right there in “the Law”.

Remember these principles:

The OT is the foundation of the NT. And the NT is the fulfillment of the OT. The Jewish faith is the foundation of the Christian faith. The Christian faith is the fulfillment of the Jewish faith.

“The Narrow Way”

Law of God

Part 3



Mat. 5:17-32

The Sermon on the Mount, taken from the words of Jesus

Matthew chapters 5-7

**“What is the Value of the Old Testament Law of God,
in the Life of the Present Day believer in Jesus Christ?”**

"Enter by the narrow gate..."
Matthew 7:13a

SERIES: "The Narrow Way"

DATE: July 19, 2020

Sermon Title: "The Law, the Heart and the Spirit"

Text: Mat.5:17-20

Subj: What part does our OT play in the life of Born again Christians?

Mat 5:17-18 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Mat 5:19-20 ESV (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

REVIEW: We are seeking to answer the question: **WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE PRESENT DAY BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?**

Regarding the Law of God and the Christian, we have considered:

1) The OT Law of God presents God's dealings with His people; The Law is of immense historical value as it presents lessons from the examples of others, in order for us to learn from their mistakes and can avoid having to repeat the same painful experiences.

2) The OT Law exalts God's character of holiness. There is probably nothing more basic about the OT than the holiness of God. Without the OT Law of God, we would not have the depth of teaching on the holiness of God.

3) The OT Law of God establishes God's Authoritative standard of Righteousness: God's Word is Truth and His Truth is not optional. This is the standard to which God holds all of mankind accountable.

3) With that standard of righteousness, The OT Law of God emphasizes the unrighteousness of mankind This is the Reality of the

Depravity of all Humanity. This realization of our present spiritual state is of the utmost importance.

4) The OT Law convicts us of our need of a Savior.

5) The Law of God points to the promise of the coming Messiah.

INTRODUCTION:

There is a misunderstanding among many people today and it is a line of thought that sees the OT as harsh, but the NT as easy and comforting. The God of the OT is harsh and mean, while the God of the NT is kind and loving. And for many, that is confusing and becomes an insurmountable hindrance to their faith.

ILL) Recently, I was driving and listening to the radio, which I rarely do. There was this Bible Answer man taking caller's questions and Caller asked:

"I've been studying Christianity for a long time. And I know about Jesus, I know about God, I know about the Holy Spirit and the church and things like that; but I just can't come to believe in Jesus because it just seems like the whole Bible *doesn't make sense to me*. Because we've got the Old Testament with this God of anger and then the New Testament was a god of love, and I just don't see how the two work together or come out. Maybe if I could understand that then maybe I would actually believe in Jesus. Can you help me?

And the caller hung up and so at this point the Bible answer man - I'm just referring to him as that because he was the guy that was taking the questions for people on the radio-- he began to answer this fellow's question and he was lengthy, he was a bit complicated, and a little bit confusing. And I began out loud just saying "**tell him about the foundation, tell him about the foundation of the Old Testament. and about the Fulfillment of the New Testament. Tell him tell him about the foundation and about the Fulfillment.**"

He never did, and I couldn't help but wonder when that guy finished his lengthy explanation; I wonder if the caller understood and if it made sense enough to where he could actually believe in Jesus?

* Its really not that hard to understand.

You know the OT doesn't give us everything that ever happened between God and his people. Sometimes we think that all that we have here (our OT) is all that was ever said, and all that ever transpired between God and humanity over the past 6,000 yrs. NOW maybe we wouldn't actually state it that way, but that is how we often view Scripture. There were thousands of years of events that are not mentioned in Scripture. There are countless conversations between God and His people or his prophets that aren't written down in Scripture. There was much much more. And maybe if we had more, we might be able to answer those questions a little better.

But we do know that God, through His Holy Spirit, gave us all we need to know, for faith and for life and godliness, in order to accomplish His purpose.

2Pet. 1:3 According as his divine power has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue:

And where does that knowledge about God come from? It comes from the OT Law, the **Foundation of our Faith**. Friends, if we can't by faith, accept as Truth, what we may not fully grasp yet, then how are we going to help others believe, who may have similar questions?

So We are still attempting to answer the question: **“What is the value of the OT Law of God, in the life of the present day believer in Jesus Christ?”**

TODAY our focus is “the Law, the Heart and the Spirit”; or the Old Testament Law, the Wickedness of the heart, and the Transforming Holy Spirit.

We begin with this question:

I. WHAT IS MEANT BY God's PROMISE TO WRITE HIS WORD ON OUR HEARTS?

I believe it to be directly related to the OT being the foundation of our faith and the NT being the fulfillment of our faith. The OT looks forward to the NT Fulfillment of the promises of the Messiah, and the Truths about the end times. And the NT looks back to the same Foundational promises of the OT.

Remember: “The Law” refers to the 10 commandments, the first 5 books of the Old Testament, as well as the whole of our Old Testament, which is the Jewish holy book. These are all referred to as the Law.

And our crucial principle is this: The OT is the Foundation for the NT and the NT is the Fulfillment of the OT. Likewise, The Jewish Faith is the Foundation of the Christian Faith, and the Christian Faith is the Fulfillment of the Jewish Faith.

The FOUNDATION of the OT Law

Jer 31:33 ESV For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

There are people today who say: “We don't need the OT Law any longer, because God has promised to write His law(OT) on our hearts(NT). The Law is part of the OT, and writing God's Law on our hearts is part of the NT. So as NT Christians, we have the law of God in our hearts, therefore we no longer need the OT Laws as it was. So unfortunately, that is the sentiment of many present day Christians.

So they discount, devalue and diminish its importance and relevance for NT believers, with such excuses as: “The OT is too old.” “Its no longer relevant.” “We live in different times, so we need something that speaks to our day” “We don't need the OT Law because God has written His Law in our hearts.”

The Literal Law of God on stone and parchment, is not replaced by the spiritual law of God upon the hearts of flesh. The HS does not replace nor supplement the written law but He is complimentary together with the written law, as is any teacher, only supernaturally or divinely so.

ILL) So My Dad had an old Buick which had a speed alert alarm on it. YOu could set it at 70mph and if you went over the speed limit, this alarm would go off to alert you.

Now imagine, that just because we had the speed limit alert in our car, we decided we no longer needed the speed law outside the car. That doesn't make sense does it. The Alert is new and important, but it only serves to remind us of the speed limit law itself.

This Prophecy was to the Jew first but also to the gentile. While the OT Jew had God's written word, they, quite often, did not desire to obey; or if they did obey, they often detested God's law, thinking it to be distasteful and burdensome.(Malachi)

This prophecy in Jere.31;33 - "I will put my law within them, and I will write my on their hearts...". This is not in reference to removing, the law, or abolishing the law, or devaluing the Law, but actually the opposite is true. To have God's law in one's heart and not merely in our minds - is the difference between mere knowledge and desire. The law in their hearts referred to that which was no longer burdensome, but that which they valued, and treasured; and they would submit to that law with great joy. NOt a mandate but a genuine desire of the heart. This was part of what it meant to "write the law on your hearts".

READ Ps.119:9-16 and take note of the author's perspective on the Law of God. In v.12 he praises the Law. In v.14 he rejoices in the Law. And in v.16 he delights in the Law. Why? Because the Law is so much more than "dos" and "don'ts". The Law presents the history between a faithful God and His faithless people. The Law exalts the holiness of God. It establishes the standard of God's righteousness for all people. The Law illuminates our need for a Savior and it promises the advent of the Lord Jesus Himself. The Law is God's directives, his guidelines for

appropriate worship, the psalms of worship and outcry to God, the wisdom of God, the Promises of God which are still to come and the prophecies of God's workings in the end times.

I did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. God promised to write His law on our hearts. Friends, God never promised to change the value or power of His law, but He did promise to change the hearts of His people, from the inside out.

The FULFILLMENT of the Law, Heart and Spirit.

Jere.31;33 - "I will put my law within them, and I will write my on their hearts..."

And be sure we get this! This does not occur because the Law has been changed, or abolished, or devalued or discontinued; Its not that the law would be changed, but that the heart of the reader would be what would be changed.

God was not going to abolish the Law, but would Fulfill the law with the Indwelling Holy Spirit, so we would desire Gods' law, Love the Lord and would become His people. And I believe it is worth noting that what is put into their hearts that they begin to desire, is the "Law".

Therefore, should not the love, desire and supreme valuing of the OT Law be a sign that a person is a genuine believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, with the Indwelling Holy Spirit abiding within him/her? This is an OT Promise of God's people beginning to desire and love God's word, or law. IT is an OT promise of a NT fulfillment.

"God has promised to write His word in our hearts, so we no longer need the OT Law." OK, if that is the case, then I'd like to ask you to recite the entire 5 books of Moses with your eyes closed. In the original language.

You see, this Foundational OT prophecy seems to refer to the future Fulfillment of the giving of the HS to both the believing Jew and gentile. The Blessings upon the Jews, are the Foundational Truths for gentiles or

the NT church. The Promises of God to the Jews, trickle down to the church as well, not all are applied the same, but definitely affect both.

At the same time or era or economy of the workings of God, His Word or Law will be written within them, even on their hearts. The idea that under the New Covenant, God will make his people not only more aware of His word, but more receptive and more obedient. And rather than binding the Law of God on their hands or strapping them in “frontlets” between their eyes, or carving them on the doorpost of our homes and gates of our cities (Deut.6:4-9); the Law of God would be within their hearts not only for memory, but for love, desire and joyful application.

Heb 8:7-13 ESV For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. (8) For **he finds fault** with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, (9) not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. (10) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (11) And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. (12) For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." (13) In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

v.8) “**He finds fault**” - Was the OT really faulty? Broken? Only from the human perspective. It accomplished the exact purpose for which God gave it. The Covenant was not faulty or broken, but the people were.

v.13) “**OT obsolete**” – only in that it was ineffective on its own; that the time of the Foundation standing alone, is over; and the time of the Fulfillment of the OT Foundation in the New Covenant has come. The OT stood alone and could not accomplish for the people, what they

really needed. But the NT or the New Covenant, built on the foundation of the OT, together would be capable of doing exactly what the Old Covenant did not, that is bring reconciliation to God with His people.

The only fault of the OT is that, by itself, it was temporarily incomplete – by design. And the only reason it was incomplete was that it was by itself, temporary and incomplete.

This is evident, as we come to the end of the OT in the book of Malachi,

Mal 4:4-6 ESV (4) "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. (5) "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. (6) And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."

God acknowledges that he is estranged from his people, the Hebrews. And Gods last words, prior to His 400 yrs of silence, is that He would bring a New Covenant to fulfill and accomplish what the Old Covenant was never designed to accomplish.

In short, it was that God's people would come to genuinely love and rejoice, in their relationship with a holy God and His righteous standards

II. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN RELATION TO THE LAW)

As the HS is to the law, a teacher; so the law is to the HS, a tool. The tool gives the craftsman something to grab hold of and to work with. The Law gives the teacher something to teach, instill and bring to mind for its students. The Teacher effectively and masterfully uses the law/Word of God to teach and apply into the hearts and minds of His student.

THIS IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE OT LAW OR THE OLD COVENANT

Eze 36:24-27 ESV (24) I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. (25) I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. (26) And I will give you a **new** heart, and a **new** spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (27) And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my **statutes** and be careful to obey my **rules**.

Here the New heart and the Spirit putting the Law of God in our hearts accomplishes what? Causes the believers to obey God's statutes, rules and Law. So clearly those things are not abolished or devalued.

Ezekiel emphasizes God giving His Spirit to His people (Jew first and trickling down to the gentile), so that they would not only believe and obey his Word out of sheer duty, but that God would place a new heart to love and desire Gods' word; and His Spirit would be that which makes the difference. IN writing His word on their/our hearts (Jere.31) and giving a new heart & Spirit (Ez.36). That meant the written word, then in stone, would become as desirable and as sweet for the Jew as honey.(Ps.19:9-10). So we notice in Ez.36:27 that it is this new heart, and new Spirit, that does not take the place of the written Law of God, but in fact uses the written word as a sharp and effective tool, which quickens the written statutes and rules for the Jew first(Ez.36:27) and calls all the written Word to be recollected to the gentiles as well. (Jn.14:26)

So the Law on the hearts was not intended to replace the Law on the stone, but to become our inner conscientious teacher of that law; taking the Law as a sword and cutting to the heart of the hearer, convicting (Jn.16:8; Heb.4:12), and converting or reviving the soul of the believer.(Ps.19:7)).

Q: in this context: "What is the value of the law of God, in the life of the believer in Christ?"

Q: Is the Law of God, negated under the New Covenant? No, it is fulfilled.

Q: Does the Holy Spirit supersede the work or purpose of the Law of God in the life of the Christian? No, the Holy Spirit becomes the Master Teacher, using the infallible Truth of the Law.

A New Spirit for the New Covenant

This is fulfillment of the Foundation of the OT law or the Old Covenant.

Eze 36:26-27 ESV And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (27) And I will put my Spirit within you, and **cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**

The Promise in the Old Testament, for a New Covenant fulfillment - is not a taking away with the old and bringing in something new, but a fulfilling of the old and a Transition into the fulfilled New covenant. The OT pointed to a NT time when there would be Heart change and Life conversion.

Through the prophet Ezekiel, the Holy Spirit inspired Ezekiel to communicate this Truth about Him, the Holy Spirit and the Law of God. The idea seems that the Holy Spirit will change our hearts of stone to hearts of flesh. Now hard hearts resilient to God's Word, but soft hearts which will be tender and receptive to God's Word/Law. This doesn't seem to be a promise of replacement but one that would be a compliment to the other.

Eze. speaks of the HS being the equipper for enabling NT believers in Christ, to love the Law and honor God by it. This is the NT fulfillment.

The Helper would Complement the Word

Joh 14:25-26 ESV "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. (26) But the Helper, the **Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will

send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance **all that I have said** to you.

This refers to the ministry of reminding or bringing to remembrance, what is already written and already known, regarding Truth.

Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the Helper, who will help us by, teaching us all things and bringing God's word to our remembrance. He does not come to replace God's law, but to sensitize and tenderize the heart or spirit of a man, in order to become more receptive and more responsive to the Word of God we already know. The Word of God becomes as a handle for the Holy Spirit to grab hold of and work it, in our hearts, minds, lives, choices and attitudes.

The Word of God and the Spirit of God work together, not to the exclusion of either but in fulfillment of what God always intended His people to experience. First came the Foundation of the OT Law; then came the fulfillment of the NT.

Joh 16:7-14 ESV (7) Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (8) And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: (9) concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; (10) concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; (11) concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. (12) "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. (13) When the **Spirit** of truth comes, he will **guide you into all the truth**, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (14) He will glorify me, for he will **take what is mine and declare it to you**.

We have the Law on the outside, and the Spirit on the inside; both working together for the glory of God and in guiding the believer in righteous living. For the NT Christian, the Word of God, OT or NT, is now a handle of which the HS can in a sense, grab hold of and use, in

the heart and life of the Christian. It is not the ministry of the HS to teach, remind, or convict of that which is outside the Word of God. But to take the tool of the Law and remind and convict about the Revealed word of Truth.

REMEMBER: As the HS is to the law, a teacher; so the law is to the HS, a tool. The tool gives the Master Craftsman Teacher something to work with. The Law gives the teacher something to teach and bring to mind. The teacher effectively and masterfully uses the law/Word of God to teach, convict, convert and apply to the hearts and minds of His student.

CONCLUSION:

Working together with the Word of God, the Spirit of God works from the inside with our conscience. He takes what is known and reminds us, enlightens and explains to us. He helps us understand and teaches us. This is why good Bible study is so important. It is a tool for the Holy Spirit to grab hold of and to use in transforming our lives into the life like Jesus. .

He Re-Sensitizes our desensitized conscience. He Un-Sears our sin seared conscience. He Un-Caluses our hard, calloused hearts and makes a heart as was originally intended. A transformed heart is a heart of flesh, not a hard heart; not a resilient spirit; not calloused, but soft, tender, sensitive, to Gods' will, the Spirit's work, and to His powerful word.

In closing, Here is something to think about: We don't have to have all the answers to people with questions about all these things about the Law and Grace. You don't have to have all the answers about the value of the OT Law, in the life of a present day believer. This principle alone has the ability to fundamentally change the way people think about the connection of the OT and the NT. Here it is:

"The Old Testament is the Foundation of the New Testament. And the New Testament is the Fulfillment of the Old Testament. The Jewish Faith is the Foundation of the Christian Faith. The Christian faith is the Fulfillment of the Jewish Faith in Jesus Christ."

This principle is the answer to a thousand other lesser questions. If we can help people understand this OT and NT relationship, it can fundamentally change their way of thinking about the Bible as a whole.

If people can grasp that principle, it will give them a principle through which they can filter every other question they have about God's Word. And once that happens, they will begin to discover answers to their questions AND that some questions will actually dissolve, because the contrast or the conflict between the OT and NT will disappear – Because of that principle. I hope we all get this!



SERIES: “The Narrow Way” **DATE:** July 26, 2020

Sermon Title: “Not Under Law, but under grace”, pt.1”



Text; Mat.5:17-20

Subj: What part does our OT play in the life of Born again Christians?

REVIEW: We are seeking to answer the question: **WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE PRESENT DAY BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?**

Remember: the Law refers to (1) the 10 Commandments, (2) The first 5 books of the OT (Gen-Deut) or “the Books of Moses” and (3) the whole of the Jewish holy book, which is our OT, is considered the Law.

What the Jew thinks about when they hear “the Law” and what we think about, are not necessarily the same things. We hear “the OT Law” and we think – “Dos & Don’ts” and being saved by keeping the Law. But the Jewish mind thinks: “the Law” is worship guidelines, lessons on God’s dealings with his people, Praise and outcries to God, Proverbs of wisdom, promises for Israel and Prophecies on the coming end time events.

We have learned:

- 1) The OT Law of God presents God’s dealings with His people
- 2) The OT Law of God exalts the holiness of God.
- 3) The OT Law of God establishes God’s standard of Righteousness:
- 4) The OT Law of God emphasizes the unrighteousness of mankind
- 5) The Law convicts of our need of a Savior.
- 6) the Law of God points to the coming Messiah.
- 7) The OT Law is guidelines for worshipping God and gaining Wisdom for every area of human life.
- 8) The Law of God is about God’s calendar which causes us to remember our past, and to anticipate things yet to come.
- 9) The OT Law is the Foundation for our NT and the NT is the Fulfillment for our OT Foundation.

* From Gen to Rev. the OT has always looked forward to Jesus Christ and the NT looks back to the promises of His appearing.

Mat 5:17-18 *ESV* (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Mat 5:19-20 *ESV* (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, all our lessons on the OT Law begin to come together. Today, Lord willing, all the principles we have been learning will begin to make sense. – I hope.

Today as we go through this lesson I am hoping to hear people throughout the sanctuary proclaiming aloud: "**A-Ha!**" as these principles are coming together and the crucial relationship between the OT and NT begins to dawn on you, with an uncontainable, "**A-Ha!**"

So, I actually had an old friend of mine contact me this week and told me, someone at work had asked him; "If we are obligated to keep the 10 commandments?" And "Are we under the Law of the OT?" – True Story. I told my friend, "it is not a highly complicated point, but it is a bit lengthy so I have him some bare bones from what our lessons have been about over the past 2 months; mainly the principles and main points of misunderstanding. Near the end of the day, I get a response from my friend: "Wow thanks. It all makes sense to me now and is easier to understand. Now I know how I can begin to answer the question."

Today, we are in the middle of national social upheaval; political upheaval, Economic upheaval, Medical upheaval, and Christian

upheaval. Not generically “religious” upheaval, but specifically Christian upheaval.

Pastors urging the church today, to devalue and distance ourselves from the OT. Previously evangelical pastors coming to the sudden realization that there is no hell, God is a god of love and they reject Biblical Truth regarding, God, sinners and eternal punishment. Youth pastors leaving the faith all together, becoming Atheists or declaring themselves gay. Christian artists declaring they no longer believe in God or they are no longer Christian. Some “celebrity” Christians walking out on their traditional Christian faith, because they can’t see how the God of the OT and the God of the NT could possibly be the same. So they have stopped pretending to understand and have simply discarded the whole of their Christian life. This is also a big score for Satan. A very big score!

For some in the church today, the greatest issue in their life, has become, the issue of being forced to wear a mask. Far too many have allowed that to become the all-consuming issue and the focus of their thoughts, conversations, discussions and energies. And that is one more sign of the Christian upheaval in America today. And I have never heard anyone confess this to me personally, but as I have been told by others, there are Christians who have left their churches, because their church has **attempted to comply with the government’s requirements for wearing a mask**. And they have left their church to find another church where the church is not “controlled by the government”.

JESUS GIVES US A WARNING:

* The words of Jesus, gives us a sober warning regarding how we are to view, treat and pass on to others, about the value or devaluing of God’s OT Law.

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| 2Tim. 2:15 ESV Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the |
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word of truth.

Some versions read; “Study to show yourselves approved unto God....” This admonition is directed to the Christian, to urge the original recipients then, as well as the readers today; to be diligent in our reading and studying the Word of God, as a craftsman would be diligent in using his tools to perform a task to build a project. And we are urged to handle God’s word in a manner that will not cause us to be ashamed, should God call us to give account for what we study, learn and teach to others.

The Unchanging Law

* Some feel the OT is too old and outdated, too irrelevant or nonsensical. But I would say that it only appears that way to those who have failed to read, study and learn from it. Consider the words of Jesus.

Mat 5:19 ESV (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

The Law of God has always been the timeless, authoritative, guide which exalts the holiness of God, establishes God’s standard of Righteousness, illuminates our own unrighteousness and need for a savior and causes readers to look forward to the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ - from Gen. to Revelation. And it continues to be that today.

Likewise - From Gen. to Revelation - God has dealt with humanity graciously and mercifully, because it is not merely what He does, but it is more of Who He is. God has not changed, from eternity to eternity – He is the same, yesterday, Today and Forever.

Please let go of the idea that the OT must be discounted because it is “Law” and not grace. That notion is false and must be rejected.

Jesus urges us to never Relax or Devalue the Law

Mat 5:19-20 ESV (19) Therefore whoever ¹relaxes one of the least of these commandments and ²teaches others to do the same will be called ³least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

¹“Relaxes” one small part: this means to “loose”; as to untie a shoe or unhitch an ox from its cart. It refers to dismissing, dissolving or diminishing the value of something.

²“teaches others to do the same”: This is one mistaken or deceived person, deceiving others, by their shameful understanding or misunderstanding of the value of the OT Law of God. Oh if Satan can only deceive the church into thinking, “the OT has lost its luster and we need to distance ourselves from it if we really want our church to grow”; Oh, the victory he will have won.

³“Least in the kingdom of heaven”: This doesn’t seem to imply that a person could lose their salvation by misunderstanding the Bible and passing those misunderstandings on to others. But the fact is, that as Christians we can live, think, or practice things that displeases God. It will be possible one day to stand before God to give account for all we have done or said and at that time, find ourselves ashamed for what we had done. [Mat.12:36; Rom.14:12; Heb.4:13;]

This refers to citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, displeasing our King. If we diminish, discount or devalue the OT Law then we are destroying the Foundation of the New Testament. Some think they are only devaluing the OT, in order to focus more on the NT. But without the Old Testament, there can be no New Testament. **“A-Ha!”**

Devalue the OT and we destroy the Foundation of the NT. Now surely we see why Satan wants us free of the OT Law of God.

We must not “relax” the Word of God, not even the OT Law.

“Not Under Law, but Under Grace”

* We will look at 2 phrases of this statement.

REMEMBER: We are still attempting to answer the question: “What is the value of the OT Law of God, in the life of the present day believing Christian?”

Rom 6:14-15 ESV (14) For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (15) What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!

“We are not under the Law, but under grace.”

What does this mean? We have spent the last 2 months, leading up to this specific point` focused on the Law of God. Some refer to that statement to mean: **(1)** “We have no obligation to any written Law, but only how we sense the Holy Spirit’s leading in our hearts”. **(2)** “In the NT, we are no longer saved by keeping the OT Law, because today, we are not under the Law, but we are now under His grace or saved by His grace.” **(3)** This refers to a theological belief system, which views our present NT era, as a time when God deals with His people, the church, graciously, as opposed to OT times, when God dealt with the Jews according to the strict and harsh guidelines of the Law.” All three of these positions, we would consider to be in error.

“Under the Law” What does that mean? . Context is Everything!

I am going start, by giving you our answer. (1) The statement: “You are not under Law, but under grace”, is exclusively used by the Apostle Paul alone, in his NT writings.

And being “under the Law”, refers to being guilty of violating the holiness of God; acting in a sinful manner which manifests the depravity of one’s own humanity; and ultimately refers to being justly deserving of the penalty of eternal judgment from God.

And the latter portion of that statement –

“Under Grace” What does that mean?.

“You are under grace”- refers to the state of being an undeserving recipient, of God’s unmerited favor due to the gift of God Himself, who has taken our own guilt, and received our own penalty, for our own sin, therefore cancelling that guilt and removing that penalty for our sin, through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

It seems that each time Paul uses this terminology, it is in reminding the Christians to whom he is writing, to remember their faith in Jesus Christ. He urges them to be informed on how God, through His Son Jesus, has rescued them from their domain of darkness and to be freed from the condemnation from the Law, bringing guilt for their sins and having separated them from God.

You Are Not under Law, but under Grace”

[Rom.2:12, 3:19; 6:14,15; 1Cor.9:20-21; Gal.3:10, 4:4,5,21, 5:18; Phil.3:6]

* As I was preparing for this message, I wanted to find a specific passage from Paul, that would illustrate more comprehensively what this phrase means.

So “You are **NOT** Under the Law but under Grace” is a principled summary of Col.2:11-15.

Col 2:11-15 ESV (11) [¹In him] also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, (12) having [²**been buried**] with him in baptism, in which you were also [³**raised with Him**] through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised Him from the dead. (13) And you, who [⁴**were dead**] in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, [⁵**God made alive**] together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, (14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (15) [He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Him.

1“**In Him**” refers to being a genuine believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; having your sins forgiven, your soul saved and having received the gift of everlasting life.

2“**Been Buried**”: Past hopelessness before Christ

3“**Raised with Him**”: Present Hopefulness having received Jesus

4“**were dead**”: under the condemnation and punishment and guilt of the Law due to our sin.

5“**God made Alive**”: result of faith in Christ, which results in eternal spiritual life as one steps from eternal death into life everlasting.

So when we read: “We are not under law but under grace”, we must not read it as a command, a warning, nor an admonition ‘to stop working your way to heaven...’. But we must see it as Paul intended it; as a theological clarification of a believer in Jesus’ relational standing between them and God. “***A-Ha!***”

We will pick up here, next time.

Today we celebrate the Lord’s communion together.

READ Mark 14:12-26

Imagine this; without the supreme value of the Old Testament, we have no Foundation for the New Testament. And without the OT Law we would have no communion.

The OT is the Foundation for the NT and the NT is the Fulfillment of the OT. Therefore, the OT Passover is the basis and Foundation for the NT Communion. And the NT Communion is the Fulfillment of the OT Passover. Without the OT, we would have not NT. Without the Foundation we would have not Fulfillment. Without the Passover, we would have no Communion.

Lets let that sink in.

CONCLUSION:

(1) Thank God for His Law, His Word that gives us **Hope.**

Psa 130:1-5 ESV A Song of Ascents. Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD! (2) O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! (3) If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? (4) But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. (5) I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;

2) Thank God for His daily, continuous, inexhaustible love and kindness and faithfulness that is promised so clearly in His word.

Lam 3:19-24 ESV Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! (20) My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. (21) But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: (22) The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (24) "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

3) Thank God for His Saving grace. It is not merely what he does, or how He acts; but It is the essence of who he is; His character, His attributes;

Eph 2:4-9 ESV But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, (5) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- (6) and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (8) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

SERIES: “The Narrow Way” **DATE:** August 2, 2020

Sermon Title: “Not Under Law, but under grace”, pt.2

Text: Mat.5:17-20

Subj: What part does our OT play in the life of Born again Christians?

REVIEW: We are seeking to answer the question: **WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE PRESENT DAY BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?**

****IF** we understand this, then we will have a better understanding of the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Remember: We hear “the OT Law” and we think – “Dos & Don’ts” and being saved by keeping the Law. But the Jewish mind thinks: “the Law” is worship guidelines, lessons on God’s dealings with his people, Praise and outcries to God, Proverbs of wisdom, promises for Israel and Prophecies on the coming end time events.

We have learned:

- 1) The OT Law of God presents God’s dealings with His people
- 2) The OT Law of God exalts the holiness of God.
- 3) The OT Law of God *establishes* God’s standard of Righteousness:
- 4) The OT Law of God emphasizes the unrighteousness of mankind
- 5) The Law convicts of our need of a Savior.
- 6) the Law of God points to the coming Messiah.
- 7) The OT Law is guidelines for worshipping God and gaining Wisdom for every area of human life.
- 8) The Law of God is about God’s calendar which causes us to remember our past, and to anticipate things yet to come.
- 9) The OT Law is the Foundation for our NT and the NT is the Fulfillment for our OT Foundation.

INTRODUCTION:

Again, all our lessons on the OT Law are now beginning to come together. Today, Lord willing, all the principles we have been learning will begin to make sense. – I hope. I hope to hear some “**A-Ha**”s today.

REVIEW

I. Jesus gives us a warning: “Do Not Relax the Law”

Mat 5:19a (ESV) (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven

Don't diminish or devalue the OT Law, so we will not be displeasing to God nor ashamed, when we stand to stand before Him to give account for how we have lived our lives.

II. “We are Not Under the Law, but Under Grace”

Rom 6:14-15 ESV (14) For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (15) What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!

“We are not under the Law, but under grace.”

What does this mean? We have spent the last 2 months, leading up to this specific point; which we covered in part, last week.

So when we read: “We are not under law but under grace”, we must not read it as a command, a warning, nor and admonition ‘to stop working your way to heaven...’. **But** we must see it as Paul intended it; as a theological clarification of a believer in Jesus’ relational standing between them and God. **“A-Ha!”** [ENDED July 26, 2020]

Once we trust in Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. Therefore we are no longer “under the guilt of the law”, or “under the condemnation of the law”, or “under the penalty of the law”, nor “under the shame or burden of the law”.

Today, we turn to the second part of that phrase: “We are not under the law, but are under grace”. Today or focus is on “getting a handle on grace”.

ILL) As a small child, I can remember my Dad teaching me to drink from the toilet in order to survive. I don't know why he taught me this.

Maybe it was in case one day we woke up, and as a result of some apocalyptic event, we found ourselves in a global drought and the only water on planet earth was right there in our toilet- we would be able to survive by drinking that toilet water.

Now I always believed my Dad; anything he ever told me I believed it to be true. But teaching that I could drink the toilet water to survive - I guess you could say I never really bought it. Until - until one day, my dad drew me near, to the toilet, and pointed out to me that the water in the toilet bowl was nasty. But the water in the toilet tank, or the “water closet” was clean water and they were not the same water. So in the event we were ever out of water, we could wash our hands with the water in the toilet tank, and we could even drink it if necessary.

A-Ha! Well, now that he put it that way, it all made sense to me. I now felt I could believe him. And I could believe him, because he helped me understand why it was ok to drink the water because, he helped me to more accurately understand the relationship between the water in the toilet bowl and the water in the toilet water tank.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “NOT UNDER LAW but UNDER GRACE” pt.2?

So far we have learned the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament. And we have understood better, the relationship to being “under the Law” and being “under grace”.

So, for Part 2, the term “Under the Law” has to do with our standing before God or His perception of us outside of or before we trust in Christ, repent from our sins, receive Christ and His salvation, but are still guilty of our sins, according to the Laws of God and deserving punishment and judgment for our sin. So the law is not being “relaxed” but is being understood in relationship to our NT faith in Jesus.

(1) So “**Under the Law**” must be defined in the context of its usage, as there are often specific, contextual inferences whenever that phrase is used. Depending on what Paul was already referring to, Being “**Under the Law**” may mean, being “**under the curse of the law**”– referring to the far reaching effects of man’s original sin, which passed the blame of sin, as well as penalty and punishment of sin upon all men.

Gal 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continues not in **ALL** things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Those who are “**under the law**” are under the curse of the law because they are presently without Christ, and are still guilty of the original sin of Adam and Eve, as well as their own personal sins.

If someone does not continue in properly keeping **ALL** the law is cursed. James 2:10 emphasizes that if you break one law, you are guilty of breaking all the law of God. There are no little sins, or single sins, or light weight sins from God’s perspective. Sin is Sin and all sin is serious business and any sin makes us guilty and deserving of judgment before God.

(2) Or “**Under the Law**” may refer to being “**under the burden of the law**” -that which we could never carry or keep; but was a burden that was intended to remind us of our own personal hopelessness, apart from a Source of Help and grace, outside of ourselves; Therefore, the Law caused us to look forward or upward to a greater Power; not necessarily to help us keep the law, but that would make things right for all who could not keep the law. This pointed to our guilt, due to our personal inability to live perfectly or obey God’s Standard, righteously.

If you ask people who to get to heaven, or how they can be saved? Most will say: “by being good? Or by keeping the 10 commandments?” Which is odd because those people knew they needed salvation because they were not good and had broken God’s commandments; yet their answer to how to get to heaven, was to do the very thing they are

incapable of doing, that is to be better, or to keep more commandments than you break.

Where we go wrong is when we realize we have broken the Law of God, then we decide to really buckle down and do a better job at obeying and keeping the Law, rather than allowing our guilt over our sin, to drive us to seek salvation through Jesus Christ, God's only Son and our only Savior. How confused and deceived so many people are when it comes to eternal salvation. We are not saved by keeping the law, because no one was ever saved by keeping the law – not in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament.

It seems there are many, who understand that we are guilty of sin, by disobeying God's Law, but think that 'other's couldn't do it but now we can. The Jews didn't have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, so they could not perfectly keep the Law and refrain from sinning. BUT now as NT Christians, we have the indwelling HS who empowers us to obey the OT and Keep the Law perfectly'. That is EXACTLY **WRONG**. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. We are not saved by "NOT breaking the Law", neither are we kept saved, by not breaking the OT Law.

(3) Or may think "**Under the Law**" might mean being "**under the condemnation or judgment of the law**": that being a reference to the sentence of eternal condemnation or judgment of spending a Christless eternity, paying for the sins which Jesus died to atone for; So that through Jesus Christ, we have the assurance:

Rom 8:1-3 ESV (1) There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are [in Christ] Jesus. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. (3) **For God has done what the law**, weakened by the flesh, **could not do**. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

Before Christ, there is the assurance we will be condemned and will be judged by God for our sins. But we trust in Christ, and our sins are

forgiven, therefore the condemnation or judgment for those sins are paid for by Jesus, and removed from our record.

Therefore, through faith in Jesus Christ, we are no longer under the judgmental, condemnation of the Law. Before trusting in Jesus, everyone is under the law and its eternal condemnation. But after trusting in Jesus' full, finished and final, death-blood sacrifice on Calvary, we are no longer **under the Judgment** of the law, but **under the forgiveness** of His grace!

(4) Also, being “**Under the Law**” may according to its context, refer to being “**under the obligation of the law**” - in other words, someone being obligated by God, to live up to all the obligations of the law and all the expectations from God, in keeping its commandments, living a life perfectly righteous before God, free from personal sin or guilt.

“**Under the Law**” may indicate that one is to be held accountable to his or her actions which pertain to the law; that one day before the Judge of all the earth, we all will stand and be judged according to our deeds, our sins and our own unrighteousness.

Rom 3:19 Now we know that whatever things the law [*God's standard of Righteousness*] states; it speaks to them who are **under the law**: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

****** The Law is God's Standard of Righteousness, not our preference or someone else's opinion. It is God's Standard of Righteousness which illuminates our own personal UnRighteousness; and the communication of those Righteous standards, against the sinful propensity of all people; is intended to inform or convict everyone, that they are separated from God, are guilty of sin before Him and are presently facing judgment or eternal punishment for those sins.

We would say that here, “*under the Law*” refers to being under the obligation to the Law or to be held **accountable to the law**, so that

between God and man, there is a clear understanding or agreement, as to what sin is. Without the law, there is no understanding or guideline or condemnation for sin.

Paul uses this theological clarification, of the believer in Jesus, to help us to see that sin should not govern or characterize our lives. He states that sin is like a magnet, even after salvation but the sin that we once willing submitted to, must not be that which we *continue* to submit ourselves to as true believers in Jesus.

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| <p>Rom 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not <i>under the law</i> but under grace.</p> |
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IN Christ, sin is still an attraction, but we must now engage in heavy duty warfare against allowing sin to continue to be part of our practices or pursuits. He urges: “Don’t allow sin to be your master.” As Christians, sin should not rule over us. We should not surrender any longer to it.

Here the believer’s standing before God is different than the unbeliever. “You” is referring to the believing Christians, who were at one point just as Paul was prior to His conversion to Christ. They were previously guilty of sin under the law and would personally suffer the payment for their own sins, if it had not been for Christ’s sacrifice for them, and their faith in Him as Messiah / Savior. The Church here, is no longer under the eternal condemnation of the law, as is the unbelieving world, but we are under the effects of God’s grace, having believed, experienced that saving grace and are now forgiven, with the guilt and ordinances against us, removed due to Christ and the cross.(Col.2:13-15)

Before we ran to sin. We rejoiced in Sin. We reveled in our sin. But NOW, having been forgiven and born again into God’s family and made a New Creature in Christ – NOW we Fight Against Sin. We are convicted of our sin. We begin to hate sin as God does.

ILL) A man contacted me this week and asked: “If I professed Christ as Savior, but don’t go to church; don’t witness for Christ; and basically continue to live in sin; Will I go to heaven or to hell?”

If... If you are a true believer in Jesus, then going to church doesn’t or didn’t save you, therefore it doesn’t keep you saved. If you are a Christian, witnessing for Jesus didn’t get you out of hell, therefore witnessing now doesn’t keep you saved, nor does failing to witness disqualify you from heaven. You see, sin doesn’t keep you from being saved. While we were all sinners, Christ died for us.

So I already knew this person and I said: “If you are asking me, then it sounds like you wanted fire insurance so you could keep playing with fire. But if you want to know what God’s word says:

Rom 6:15 What then? Are we to continue to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!

**** “Under the Law”** seems to refer to being held eternally accountable for the law due to one’s own sins. Therefore, “do we consider it allowable by God, that we continue to sin, simply because we have believed in Jesus, have been forgiven for our sins and will not be held personally accountable for our past sinful actions which the law highlights”?? Absolutely not! **God Forbid!!** **MAY IT NEVER BE!** **“Not on Your Life!”** That kind of view of our faith has no place in the mind or life of a genuine believer in our Lord Jesus.

In fact, why would any true believer in Christ, attempt to find some loophole in Scripture that would allow him or her to continue to live in the very sin that Jesus died to deliver us from?

Christian: listen to what the Spirit of Jesus says.

Jas 4:7-9 ESV (7) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (8) Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you

double-minded. (9) Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

Or what Paul states: “Put on Jesus Christ and stop making plans to indulge yourself in sin of the world and the lusts of your flesh.”

(Rom.13:14) God expects us to seek to live in a manner that pleases Him. God expects us to fight against sin. God expects us to confess our sins, repent from our sins and Submit fully to God, His Holy Word and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The idea is that through faith in Jesus, Christians are not under the condemnation of the law.(Rom.8:1) Sin must not be our master. Neither should any of us think lightly of the Law of God, as though we are now allowed to live as we like, since we are saved by Grace. So I said to this person; “Why play games with God?” Why risk anything; why risk your eternal destiny on seeing how much you can get away with, without having to repent or change or give anything up for Jesus. Why not confess your sins and surrender fully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You’ll never be sorry for that.

1Cor. 9:20-21 KJV (20) And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

Albert Barnes: Whatever privileges the gospel has introduced, it has not set us free from [certain] restraints of the law. That applies still; and no man is at liberty to disregard the moral law of God. Christ came to magnify, strengthen, and to honor the law, not to destroy it.

“But under the law to Christ” - Bound by the law enjoined by Christ; under the law of affectionate gratitude and duty to him. I obeyed his commands; followed his instructions; sought his honor; yielded to his will. -- In this he would violate none of the rules of the moral law. And he here intimates, that his grand object was to yield obedience to the law of the Saviour, and that *this* was the governing purpose of his life.

And this would guide a man right. In doing this, he would never violate any of the precepts of the moral law, for Christ obeyed them, and enjoined their observance. He would never feel that he was without law to God, for Christ obeyed God, and enjoined it on all. He would never feel that religion came to set him free from law, or to devalue it; for its grand purpose and aim is to make people holy, and to bind them everywhere to the observance of the pure law of the Redeemer.

CONCLUSION:

As genuine believers in Jesus Christ, our goal should NOT be to get our ticket to heaven, then see how much we can get away with, while on our journey. The Bible certainly does not teach that. But we should genuinely believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Sin payment; gratefully receive the gift of salvation and the blessings He brings to us; And we should willingly surrender to His Lordship over our Lives.

So... “We are not under the law **but we are under grace**”. This does not mean we are no longer obligated to obey God’s moral law, but again, is a theological clarification for the church to remind them, that through faith in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven from our sins, and guilt under or according to the Law which had condemned us to the curse of the law, which was eternal death.

So We are not under the Law, but we are under grace; through faith in JC, the grace of God has been effective to save our souls and provide for us, the gift of everlasting life. “We are not under the judgment of the Law, but we are under the influence and God’s undeserved grace.

We have such reason to praise God, to rejoice and Give thanks to the Lord, for His Old Testament Foundation and for His New Testament Fulfillment.

(1) Lets be careful to Praise the Lord, for we have been purposefully created and graciously saved for His divine purpose;

Eph 2:10 ESV For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

God has a purpose for your life and he has a plan. A purpose without a plan is just good intentions. God has a purpose for your life and he also has a plan to fulfill that purpose. Why would you not want to submit completely to God and allow Him to fulfill His plan for your life?

(2) Thank God for His OT Law, His Word that gives us Hope.

Psa 130:1-5 ESV A Song of Ascents. Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD! (2) O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! (3) If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? (4) But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. (5) I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I **hope**;

To hope in God's word is not a matter of 'wishing', but in being assured. This hope is like an anchor in a terrible storm. It is like a compass when lost in the woods. It is like a road map that will guide you to your eternal (pre)destination. Its like a light that sheds light in the darkest of night.

(3) Thank God for His daily, continuous, inexhaustible love and kindness and faithfulness that is promised so clearly in His word.

Lam 3:19-24 ESV Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! (20) My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. (21) But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: (22) The **steadfast love** of the LORD never ceases; his **mercies** never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; great is your **faithfulness**. (24) "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will **hope** in him."

(4) Thank God for His Saving grace. It is not merely what he does, or how He acts; but It is the essence of who he is; His unchanging character and His eternal attributes;

Eph 2:4-9 ESV (4) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, (5) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- (6) and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (8) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Our Lord Jesus is not worthy – -- HE is not worthy of withholding anything from Him. ----He is not worthy to receive half-hearted worship. --- Our Jesus is not worthy to be given our left-over time, left-over offerings, or left-over service.

But our Lord Jesus **is** worthy, to be praised, worshiped, and obeyed with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Worthy is our Lord Jesus Christ, to receive all that we have and all that we are.

SERIES: “The Narrow Way” **DATE:** August 9, 2020

Sermon Title: “Our Greatest Need”pt.1

Text; Mat.5:20-26

REVIEW: We have been attempting to answer the question: “ WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE PRESENT DAY BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?”

Today we begin to answer the question: As citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE OUT OUR NT LIVES, IN LIGHT OF THE OT LAW?**

What difference will the Foundation of the Law have in the fulfillment of our own person faith?

Mat 5:20-26 ESV (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter **the kingdom of heaven.**

(21) "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'

(22) But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

INTRODUCTION:

ILL) So I was working around one of my coworkers this week; and he had a short sleeve shirt and the sleeves were rolled up. And I noticed a tatoo on his upper bicep, and it read.. “thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.” Ps.23:3-4. So I asked him; “So what’s with the tattoo?” HE said, which one? And I pointed to it and I quoted Ps.23:1-4. And he said; “Oh that’s from my girlfriend.” And I said; “Did she write that out for you?” And he said; “My girlfriend put the tattoo on.” And I asked; so whats the story behind that?” HE told me that his girlfriend wanted it to be a constant reminder to him. And I asked him if it has been a good reminder? And he smiled and said, “yeah, I guess it really has.”

The Law of God, was to him, a positive reminder of.. God's presence in his life.

So many people view the Word of God as a bunch of "Dos" and "Don't's"; and their objective is that their quota of "Don'ts", sprinkled with a few "Dos" will all balance out in the end. The Biblical truth is that God's Standards are vastly different than our own standards of right and wrong and Dos or Donts.

REVIEW – Remember...

Jesus brings our focus back again to His Kingdom of Heaven; that is The Kingdom of heaven, The King of the kingdom of Heaven, and the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

(1) Jesus preached: "Repent for the KoH is at hand". Then he would perform a miracle, leaving them with a foretaste of what that KoH would be like, in its fullness. HE would heal a man blind. No afflictions or deformities in God's eternal kingdom. Or he might cast demons out of a person. Satan wont rule men's hearts in Gods kingdom. Or he would raise the dead, leaving them a stark reminder that in God's eternal KoH, there is no more death, nor crying, Nor pain, nor grieving.

(2) Then in the Beattitudes; Jesus addressed the blessings of God, upon believers in Christ; as present day citizens of God's kingdom and the blessings that we possess, right now, in this present life.

(3) Jesus teaches of the value and duration of God's communicated Truth, purpose and plan, from his heart and mind, through the Law of His eternally holy word.

(4) We have been attempting to answer the question: " WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE PRESENT DAY BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?"

Today we begin shift to answer the question: **As citizens of the**

Kingdom of Heaven, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE OUT OUR NT LIVES, IN LIGHT OF THE OT LAW?

IN this section Jesus focuses on our greatest need. In Matthew, the KoH is mentioned 49 times. The KoH is the presence of God and the reign of Christ, wherever we are. Jesus is the King and we are presently under His rule and citizens of that kingdom, under His Lordship.

So our righteousness is to reflect God's righteous standards and without His righteousness, we cannot enter the Righteous Kingdom of Heaven. Which brings us to our lesson today, regarding God's standard of righteousness in His eternal kingdom.

Q#1) What does it mean to live our lives in light of God's OT Law?

A#1): It means to allow God's word or Law, to convict us of our spiritual shortcomings, or our sin. Yet it also means we can't earn our righteousness, but God does want us to live righteously, or in a manner that seeks to be directed by God's righteous Standard, the Bible. The Law is a reminder of the Presence of God and His righteous standards. And it means that true righteousness does not come from what we may do, but from what Christ has already done and has given to each of us.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

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| Mat 5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. |
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* Self-Righteous leaders. I think that most of us at some point, struggle with self-righteous attitudes, which tend to inflate our own egos, while condemning others who are not as far along in the faith as we may be, or those who struggle in some area of sin, that you or I don't struggle.

Religious leaders in Jesus day were...

Those who saw everyone's sin but their own

* When we criticize others without notice of our own sin, then we may

have fallen into the same trap as the self-righteous Pharisees of Jesus' day. Remember; what Jesus is referring to is not about works salvation or righteousness acquired by keeping the Law. The religious leaders were pretty good at presenting themselves as "Righteous". ***They*** were often viewed as the Standard of Righteousness, rather than Gods word.

To exceed the Righteousness of the Pharisees, was to not think of yourselves as Right or Self-Righteous, but the opposite was true. It was meant to bring an awareness of God and their spiritual need to mind. It reminds us to see ourselves as UnRighteous because of the law and to come to repent from our sins; confess those sins and put our faith firmly and fully in Jesus Christ.

This whole misunderstanding is prevalent in our culture today, even in our Christian culture. We tend to work harder at keeping God's law, when in fact we should be working harder to allow God's Law to cause us to see our need for Jesus, all the more.

In Matthew chapter 23, Jesus pronounces 7 "woes" against the Pharisees, for their spiritual hypocrisy.

Mat 23:2-5 ESV "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, (3) so **do** and observe whatever they tell you, but **not the works** they do. For they **preach**, but do not **practice**. (4) They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. (5) They do all their deeds **to be seen by others**. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,

The religious leaders have position and notoriety. They are admired and perhaps pedestalized. They preach righteousness but don't practice it. The didn't "practice what they preached". How many times have you heard that phrase used? They manipulated their outward appearance to make people think they were extra special or more righteous than others This was self-righteousness and their motivation was not to honor God or to be heard by God, but to be seen and admired by others.

Mat 23:13 "But **woe** to you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites**! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.

Mat 23:27-28 (27) "**Woe** to you, scribes and Pharisees, **hypocrites**! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which **outwardly** appear beautiful, but **within** are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. **(28)** So you also **outwardly** appear righteous to others, but **within** you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

So if Jesus viewed the religious leaders like this, then what was he attempting to teach? Oh how great a trap we fall into when we become more focused on impressing others and fail to make right our relationship with God. We place higher value on man's acceptance and admiration than on God's approval.

So The "Righteousness" of the religious leaders, pointed to their own self-righteousness, and actually led people away from true faith and true salvation. They saw everyone's sin but their own.

So rather than making much of our own self-righteousness we should...

Make Much of the Righteousness of Christ

* This is where Jesus is going with the whole focus on the Law, which leads us to our second question.

Q#2) What does the Law of God teach us about the Righteousness that everyone needs, but all people are missing?

A#2) We should be working harder to see our need for a righteousness that is outside of ourselves.

This is what it means for our righteousness to exceed that of the Pharisees and is a big part of what it means to live in light of God's law. Living by the Law is allowing God's righteous standards to direct our beliefs, decisions and activities. That is how we should be living on earth. But the righteousness that we must have, which exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees, and is what we are in need of to enter

into the Kingdom of Heaven must come exclusively, not from any of our own efforts, but comes directly and fully from Jesus Christ Himself as a gift which we receive through faith in Him.

2Cor. 5:20-21 ESV Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (21) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

So the Law exalts the holiness of God. The Law also established God's standard of Righteousness, not the Pharisees, but the guidelines and lifestyle depicted in God's Word.

Remember, Matthew 5:6 states: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Filled refers to livestock which are "fattened up". So the Law illuminates the sinfulness of every human being and points us to our need for Jesus Christ and the righteousness which can only come from Him.

So what does the Law of God teach us about the Righteousness that everyone needs, but all people are missing? That We should be working harder to see our need for a righteousness that is outside of ourselves and can only come from Jesus Himself. Our Righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

CONCLUSION:

Without the righteousness that can only come as a gift from Jesus Christ, none of us will enter the kingdom of Heaven; Not now – not in eternity. So where can we go to find that righteousness? Go to Jesus.

Gal 2:15-16 ESV (15) We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; (16) yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

What can we do to get that righteousness that everyone needs but all are

missing? Trust in Jesus. Believe in Jesus. Put your faith in Jesus as Gods' only Son and your only Savior. We can't work for it. We can't earn it. We will never deserve. It comes only as a gift for those who trust firmly and fully in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you been forgiven? Does your Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the most righteous of the Pharisees?

Trust in Jesus now. Repent from your sins today. You will never have to regret that!

SERIES: "The Narrow Way" **DATE:** August 16, 2020

Sermon Title: "Our Greatest Need", pt.2

Text; Mat.5:20-26

Subj: The Heart of the Law of God.

REVIEW: We have been attempting to answer the question: "WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE OT LAW OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF THE PRESENT DAY BELIEVING CHRISTIAN?"

Today we begin to answer the question: As citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE OUT OUR NT LIVES, IN LIGHT OF THE OT LAW?**

Someone has stated: "The Old Testament is the garden from which the New Testament has sprung. And the NT's blossoms testify to the riches of its OT garden."

Here is our beginning point today.

Mat 5:17-20 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets [**OT Foundation**]; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. [**NT Fulfillment**] (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

(19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the **kingdom of heaven**, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the **kingdom of heaven**. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the **kingdom of heaven**.

The Law of God, has authority in determining whether or not we enter into the kingdom of Heaven, or our understanding of the value of God's law in our lives, will have an eternal effect on our earthly, spiritual lives.

REVIEW – Remember...

I. The Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees

Mat 5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the **scribes and Pharisees**, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

This does not imply that we have to work harder and be better or more obedient than the Scribes and Pharisees. To “exceed the Righteousness of the Pharisees”, was to not think of yourselves as Right or Self-Righteous. In fact, the opposite was true. It was meant to bring an awareness of God and their spiritual need to mind. It reminds us to see ourselves as UnRighteous because of the law and to come to repent from our sins; confess those sins and put our faith firmly and fully in Jesus Christ, thus receiving not only life, but the gift of righteousness, as well.

Q: So what does the Law teach us about the Righteousness that everyone needs, but all people are missing?

The righteousness that we must have, which exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees, and is what we are in need of to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven **must come exclusively**, not from any of our own efforts, but **directly and fully from Jesus Christ Himself** as a gift which we receive through faith in Him.

2Cor. 5:20-21 ESV Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (21) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Remember, Matthew 5:6 states: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

We must not begin working harder in order to achieve our own righteousness, but trust in Jesus as God’s sin payment for our sins, and receive the free gift of eternal life and the righteousness of Christ. Righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees, is what everyone needs, but all are missing. And Our greatest need is to receive a righteousness that is outside of ourselves and can only come from Jesus Himself.

INTRODUCTION:

Psa 119:25-27 (ESV) Daleth. (25) My soul clings to the dust; give me life according to your word! (26) When I told of my ways, you answered me; teach me your statutes! (27) ***Make me understand the way of your precepts, and I will meditate on your wondrous works.***

This is a prayer we would do well to pray personally to God.

Psa 119:28-32 (ESV) Daleth. (28) My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word! (29) Put false ways far from me and graciously teach me your law! (30) I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I set your rules before me. (31) I cling to your testimonies, O LORD; let me not be put to shame! (32) I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!

This presents some significant benefits from the OT Law. (1) Life. (2) Knowledge or Truth. (3) Understanding. (4) Strength. This should cause our soul to cry out: “Oh God, don’t let us diminish or devalue your OT Law.”

TODAY: we begin looking into some examples of the OT Foundation as it is related to its NT Fulfillments.

ANGER: VIOLENCE OF THE HEART (Mat.5:21-22)

* This is a great example of how unrighteous we really are on our own and how desperately we need a source or Standard of Righteousness that everyone needs, but all are lacking.

Mat 5:20-26 ESV (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (21) "You have heard that it was said to those of old [**OT FOUNDATION**], 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment. (22) But I say to you [**NT FULFILLMENT**] that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment;

whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

Note: Those who murder and those who are angry beyond measure, are both worthy of the same judgment.

As citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE OUT OUR NT LIVES, IN LIGHT OF THE OT LAW?**

“Entering into the KoH” is stated 5 times in Matthew. And this is the first of 6 laws of God and subtle sins of mankind. This is not an exhaustive list, nor is only intended to be limited to 6. It is meant to be a sampling of sorts, to give us an idea of just how impossible it really is to “live by the Law” and to be righteous by keeping the Law of God.

And again, we are not saying that because it is impossible to fully live by the OT, we should not allow it to guide our lives, mold our attitudes and determine our choices. But that we should not expect our righteousness to come from it.

Murder and the Moral Law -- OT FOUNDATION

* Here is a lesson from the Foundation of the OT Law.

Exo 20:13 (ESV) "You shall not murder.

Note: Jesus does not address the ceremonial laws or the dietary laws, nor the nationalistic laws, nor even the judicial laws, but only what we would view as the “moral” laws of God. Some of the laws or guidelines were weightier than others and some were fulfilled in Jesus or will be fulfilled in the future.

So the people of God, have to be told, not to murder? (the Jews)

Hos 4:1-2 ESV Hear the word of the LORD, O children of Israel, for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land; (2) there is **swearing**, **lying**, **murder**, **stealing**, and committing **adultery**; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.

Note: He doesn't state that “they have been guilty of eating shellfish

again”, in violation of their dietary laws. He doesn’t rebuke them for sinning against their agricultural code by “plowing and harvesting their fields on the 7th year of “rest”. But again, the focus is on the moral law, which is directly focused on our relationship with God and with others.

In our society, lying is not a illegal, unless its on your taxes or under oath in a court of law. But I don’t think you can get arrested for calling in to work sick, when you really want time off to go fishing. And as far as I know, it is not a crime to get angry.

Command #6 from the Big “10”. Do not murder. Glad we haven’t thrown that one away. God’s Moral Law, deals with how we relate to God and/or how we relate to others. The only area where Murder is actually legal, would be...? I don’t know in the Great US of A, we don’t allow that do we? Oh yes, (1) preborn humans are allowed to be murdered, according to much of our nation’s law. (2) Mid-born human beings are allowed to be partially born, and killed, only if their brains can be suctioned out, **before** they fully exit the birth canal. (3) Any others? Oh yeah; New Born human babies, who accidentally survived a botched abortion and were born alive; are often allowed to die, or some smother them in order to kill them after they are unintentionally born.

“You have heard it said of old” would have to do with the OT **Foundation** of the Law. **“But I say to you...”** would refer to the NT **Fulfillment** or fullness of the Law being made complete by what Jesus accomplished on the cross, but also by what he taught in the Scriptures.

Anger and the Violence of the heart - the NT FULFILLMENT

Mat 5:22 ESV (22) But I say to you [**NT FULFILLMENT**] that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

“You fool” here, is not joking, but a genuine attitude of hatred and detest toward another person, made in the image of God.

Anger: violence or murder of the heart. If one can control their tongue,

then this kind of heart violence can be concealed. But if this were allowed to continue simmering over time; growing into increasing anger – it is only a matter of time before it is exposed by words or by actions. Certainly when anger turns to insult, gossip or slander, mocking, then it brings the possible judgment of “Hell Fire” Really?! Isn’t that a little over the top?

When anger and hate are felt toward others, it is difficult to control the tongue. People around you will know it, because the mouth cannot contain, that which fills the heart.

Jas 1:19-20 ESV Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, **slow to anger**; (20) for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Anger often spurs quick speech, which reveals the true content of the heart. Anger does not cause us to say things we didn’t mean. But rather it provokes us to say things we meant to say, but wish we had kept our mouths shut about. There may be an event, or situation, or person you can’t get out of your mind; and when you speak, this person, event or circumstance always comes up and may be something you cannot stop complaining about. When this occurs, it may be an indication that your anger is leading to sin.

Jas 4:2 ESV You desire and do not have, so you **murder**. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel....

Scholars are divided here. Some feel James was referring to literal physical murder, while others feel he is referring to the motivation behind murder which is unchecked anger and unresolved hatred; murder of the heart, or anger, and unforgiveness and harsh, hateful words. But Jesus makes clear that even if James is referring to anger, and hatred as murder of the heart, but not physical – that regardless of which it is – here is the kicker – the one is as horrific a sin against God’s standard of righteousness and violation of his holiness, as the other.

It seems clear to me that we are still in need of written reminders of God's standard of righteousness - the Law.

Mat 5:22 ESV (22) But I say to you **[NT FULFILLMENT]** that everyone who is ¹angry with his brother **will be liable to judgment**; whoever ²insults his brother **will be liable to the council**; and whoever says, ³'You fool!' **will be liable to the hell of fire**.

¹Here is the unchecked emotion of the inner heart of a person. ²Now, the cat is out of the bag. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks; the mouth betrays the heart. The heart may say; "Oh, its just a dislike". The heart may say, "I don't hate her." But the mouth brings it all to light and reveals that anger has crossed the line into sin.

We all are familiar with the story of Joseph and his coat of colors. Jacob loved Joseph as his favorite son and he gifted him with a special made, multicolored coat. Each time his brother saw Joseph wearing this coat, it would have been like he was carrying a sign that read, "Dad loves me more than the rest of you." And with that, Joseph's brother began to be jealous, angry and hate-filled.

Gen 37:4-5 ESV But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and ***could not speak peacefully*** to him. (5) Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more.

Unchecked anger turned to hatred. Unresolved hatred turned to violence of the heart, which was plans to murder Joseph.

When a person hates another person, they cannot speak peaceably about them. The heart may think the mouth will keep this secret, but it cannot. One person who hates another, cannot speak peaceably about them.

Even as Christians, we sometimes think that how we feel, or what we are thinking in the silence of our minds, is something we get away with. Its all good, if its just in my mind, so its OK because I am not acting on it, right? Wrong!

1Jn 3:14-15 ESV (14) We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. (15) ***Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer***, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

God's word is beyond clear. Unchecked anger, leads to unresolved hatred and can lead to "violence of the heart" or murder of the heart.

Paul urges the church in Ephesus:

Eph 4:26-27 ESV (16) [Be angry] and **do not sin**; do not let the sun go down on your anger, (27) and give no opportunity to the devil.

Frustration. Irritation. Anger. Resentment. Hatred. Murder or violence of the heart. Anger is what happens to us and is out of our control. Anger is stirred up or passionate emotion. It may refer to people, events or circumstances which stir up anger. Let us be clear here. "Be Angry" is not a command, but a warning. "Do Not Sin" is the command that should cause us to check our anger, resolve our hatred and thereby, hopefully, quench the fiery emotions and avoid potential sin worthy of judgment.

Unchecked anger goes against the heart of God. Anger that turns to hatred and murder or violence of the heart directed toward others, is still sin that is worthy of judgment.

It is important to realize, that Jesus is not adding to the law, but is clarifying it. He is revealing the fulfillment of the Foundation; and HE identifies the state of the violence of the heart that can lead to the action of physical murder.

Our attitudes toward others, can be as murder is before God. Our words of judgment upon others, criticism, Gossip, insult is slander and is sin before God.

[Eze 36:25-27 (25) I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. (26) And I will give you a **new heart**, and a **new spirit** I will put

within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (27) And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.]

It doesn't tell us God will devalue or *change the Law*, but that He will ***change the heart*** of his people toward his Law.

Jer 31:33 ESV (33) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: ***I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.*** And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Love is not necessarily an emotion, or feeling, but an action or treatment. Love your neighbor is how we are to treat the person we may be angry with. God's commandments are our guidelines or boundaries. The New heart is what becomes receptive to the Holy Spirit in us and working through us, from the inside out. The Holy Spirit grabs hold of the Word of God and has something to work with to convict us to act, or repent; and to make things right with God and with others. It is the Spirit of God, using the Word of God, in the new heart from God to "check our anger", "resolve our hatred" and to repent from and confess our sins, based on relationship stress and offenses.



Clarification from Matthew 5:21-22:

(1) “You have heard it said of old...” – Here is the **OT Foundation** of the Law. ***“But I say to you...”*** – Here is the ***NT Fulfillment of the Law.***

(2) “You have heard it said of old...” is the **Foundation of the Law** – the commandments. ***“But I say to you...” – is the Fulfillment of the Law written on the heart; the Spirit of the Law.***

(3) “You have heard it said of old...” – is the **Foundation of the Law** of God, regarding our treatment of others. ***“But I say to you...” – is what it means to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love your neighbor as yourself.***

(4) “You have heard it said...” – is the **obligation of the OT Law.**
“But I say to you....” – is the desire and intent of the fullness of a New Heart, upon which is written “Do not murder”; And is a heart that loves others, as God loves.

So can we be angry with someone, but grit our teeth and treat them nicely, and not sin? Perhaps, perhaps not. The issue is, it is not only possible, but prevalent even for Christians to be angry, unforgiving and smiling; while harboring a heart of hate and detest toward others.

It starts with unchecked anger. Then grows to unresolved hatred, expressed with uncontrolled insults. Then it increases, spreads and overtakes a person to a point of detest, with not just name calling, but an inner murderous attitude that is just as much a sin before God as if we had cut a person’s throat, just to watch them suffer and die.

A person can be free, but filled with anger, and still break God’s standards of righteousness and violate God’s holiness; and be as guilty as the man or woman in prison who was charged, tried and sentenced because of they committed murder.

CONCLUSION: Jesus doesn’t abolish nor add to the Law, but He does clarify the intent of the Law to govern our actions. This also reveals our heart and convicts us of our need, even as Christians, to confess our sins,

our attitudes of the heart and receive a fresh cleansing from the Lord. The intent here is that we receive a deliverance from a spirit that opposes what God what to develop in us. Unchecked anger can be as serious as murder because whether we carry it out or not, it is a violence of the heart, perceived by no one, except for God.

Eph 4:26-27 ESV Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, (27) and give no opportunity to the devil.

Confess unchecked anger. Confess unresolved hatred. Confess unforgiveness, and judgmental spirit. Confess an attitude of condemnation toward others. Confess anger as the violence or murder of the heart.

So how anger can we get? How far can we go before sinning? That we are not told specifically. It is as individual an answer as we are individually. It is something that is between ourselves and God and is governed by God's conviction of us and of our actions and even our thoughts.

We must simply have a heart to deal with things soon – as the Holy Spirit brings it to our attention.

1Jn 1:8-9 ESV If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

“Cleanse us from all unrighteousness.. “ or from all our failures to live up to and abide by God's standard of righteousness. All the deception of “living by the Law” yet the reality of falling so short. The Law that everyone is measured by, but that we all fall short of. Oh how we need the Law of God to reveal our need and point us to Jesus.

How often we need to come before God:

- to deal with our unchecked anger, over and over again.
- to do business with God regarding unresolved hatred toward others, over and over again.

- to humble ourselves to address our unconfessed sin, over and over again.

Ask God Now: Have I crossed the line? Am I guilty of murder of the heart? “Oh God; give us victory as we seek it. Holy Spirit fill us, control us, and change our hearts. Forgive us for not loving others as we should; forgive us for not loving You, with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

SERIES: "The Narrow Way"

DATE: August 23, 2020



Sermon Title: "Anger: Murder of the Heart

(Unforgiveness and Worship)

Subj: How hidden sin can affect my worship toward God"

Mat 5:23-26 ESV (23) So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, (24) leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (25) Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. (26) Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

REVIEW:

Text: Mat.5:20-26 **Subj:** The Heart of the Law of God.

Anger: Violence of the Heart / Murder from the heart

* This is a great example of how unrighteous we really are on our own.

As citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE OUT OUR NT LIVES, IN LIGHT OF THE OT LAW?**

IIA. Murder and the Moral Law [OT FOUNDATION]

* Here is a lesson from the Foundation of the OT Law.

Exo 20:13 (ESV) "You shall not murder.

IIB. Anger and the Violence of the heart

* This is the **[NT FULFILLMENT]**

Mat 5:22 ESV (22) But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his *brother* will be liable to judgment;

Anger: Violence (murder) of the heart. And Jesus makes clear that even if a person murders another person, or whether he is angry with murder in the heart,— that regardless of which it is —the one is as horrific a sin against God's standard of righteousness and violation of his holiness, as the other.

Today we're given an insight into the ramifications and personal effect of our unchecked anger, our unresolved hatred and our unconfessed sin against God and against others.

INTRODUCTION:

Unfortunately there are some Christians who think that, because they are saved and are now members of God's family and citizens of His eternal Kingdom of Heaven, that they are no longer under the righteous standards of God's holiness; nor are they responsible or to be held accountable for the secret sins of their heart.

But God's word teaches differently. In Matthew 5:22, Jesus refers to those who are part of this lesson and calls them "brothers". Then this is connected with the very next verses 23-24, where "brothers" are again mentioned. This is important information to consider as we look at the lesson for today.

Jesus speaks of a time...

WHEN GOD REJECTS WORSHIP (Mat.5:23-24)

* In your opinion, what makes for a good worship service? What do you personally like or need? What ministers most to your spirit? The reality is; what pleases us in worship, may not be what pleases God in worship.

God addresses...

The Danger of Routine Worship

*** Can we have a sense that our "worship service" was moving and meaningful, yet be something that is displeasing to God?**

* Its not that Gods' people weren't gathering together and sacrificing their sacrifices, offering their offerings, giving their gifts and keeping the rules concerning the Temple worship; but their hearts weren't right toward God and toward one another.

Amo 5:21-23 ESV "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. (22) Even though you offer me your burnt **offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them;** and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. (23) Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen.

It seems they have all the elements of an appropriate worship time, except a right heart. As I was thinking about what are some crucial elements for a worship service, I “googled” the question and the first result was from ChurchLeaders.com, which is the sort of “go to” internet site for anything pertaining to church ministry or leadership. Their article was entitled: “5 Elements for a Great Worship Service”. Element #1, was “Prayer”. Element #2 was “Diversity”. Element #3 was “Longer Prayer”. Element #4 was “Acoustical Guitar”. Element #5 was “Familiar Songs”. Nothing about repentance, confession or a right heart. The other result came from ELDER’s Digest: (1) A Call to Worship. (2) A Praise time. (3) Fellowship. (4) Singing. (5) Prayer. (6) Scripture reading. (7) Sermon. No wrong answers, just incomplete with no mention of any right attitude of the heart, or confession.

Mal 1:10 ESV (8) When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts. (9) And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts. (10) Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand.

In Malachi, God addresses a series of questions pertaining to his people Israel, all pertaining to their worship, their relationship with God and the issues of their heart in worship. “You have wearied the LORD with your words.” (Mal 2:17)

But they were like: “What? How have we wearied him?” Our sacrifices, and offerings and worship time have been fine, seems like to us.” We were giving you what you demanded from us. We were making sacrifices according to the letter of the Law. There was a good spirit of worship, it was meaningful... HOW could God say that?”

Sometimes worship can become more about how it makes me feel, rather than about what God desires and deserves to receive from me.

I can't help but think they were "worshipping" mindlessly.

Many of the commentators tell us that worship is more an issue of the mind or our thoughts, than of the emotions; though emotions should be part of it. But certainly emotions can be deceiving. Its more about what you know and believe about God and how you think toward God, than it is about how you feel.

-A.W. Tozer: "When Rome began to think loosely about God she began to rot inwardly, and that rot never stopped till it brought her to the ground. So it must always be with men and nations. A church is strong or weak just as it holds to a high or low idea of God. For faith rests not primarily upon promises, but upon character. A believer's faith can never rise higher than his conception of God. A promise is never better or worse than the character of the one who makes it. An inadequate conception of God must result in a weak faith, for faith depends upon the *character of God just as a building rests upon its foundation.*

Going through the motions. Getting up. Going to the Temple. Keeping the Sabbath; Celebrating with very energetic and festive singing and dancing - all the things according to the Law on the outside; but inside, in their minds and hearts, were they worshipping God by what they knew about Him? Do they love Him because of how they had experienced Him or by what they know about him? Was their worship based on who He is, what HE has done, rather than how the meeting made them feel?

Where is "a right heart"? Where is repentance and confession of personal sin? How we think about God will affect our worship.

Lam 3:19-23 ESV Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! (20) My soul continually **remembers** it and is bowed down within me. (21) But this I **call to mind**, and therefore I have hope: (22) The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

In all his difficulties and trials, the writer focuses his mind and fills his thoughts with the goodness of God and Greatness of the Lord. And it is his thoughts, that brings him to an assurance of the love, mercy of God and his own hope in God.

Sinful worship may be false worship

They may have been “worshipping” mindlessly.

But also, I can’t help but think they were “worshipping” sinfully.

* I think their sin of anger or murder of the heart, was sin that got in the way of their worship.

Mat 5:23-24 (23) So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, (24) leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

v.23-24) Worship – and there you are convicted or reminded that someone has something against you...”. Notice here it is not about becoming aware of your own anger at another person, but the focus is on someone who may be angry with you, or with me. Jesus turns the tables here and calls us to help the ones we may have angered to the degree of hindering their worship.

Interesting how this is all connected. Love God first. Love others as ourselves. You can’t love God when not loving others. The questions becomes: NOT; “Has someone offended me?” But rather, “Have I made someone angry?” Am I the cause of someone else’s anger, that is hindering their worship?” Then when I become aware of that possibility, God says, just stop what you’re doing. Go make things right with the other person or people. Then come back and pick back up. “Oh – that would be too disruptive. That would ruin the flow of the music and the preaching. It would distract us. It might even prolong the service beyond what is preferable.” When our hearts are not right toward God and others, we may think we are worshiping, but from heaven’s perspective, it just another meeting.

Mal 1:10 ESV **Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain!** I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand.

What is God saying? “I’d prefer you just shut the doors to the Temple – shut the doors to the church, if this is what your worship is like. This is not what I require of you.”

REKINDLING MEANINGFUL WORSHIP

* As repentance and reconciliation can rekindle true and meaningful relationships with others, so it can also kindle reverence and meaningful worship toward God. This should be on everyone’s list of “5 Elements for Great Worship”.

Mat 5:23-26 (25) Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. (26) Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Can we grasp the importance of this message from Jesus to His church today? Can we be held responsible for the anger of others?

To the criminal: If you aren’t reconciled, you may suffer for your crime.

* This is a reference to God’s disapproval of “worship” with a heart that is not right. Some view this as referring literally being taken to court. Others view it as representing our place before God, with unchecked anger and/ or unresolved hatred toward others, as well as unconfessed sin against our fellow man and against God.

Remember: Worship is giving to God, that which He alone is worthy to receive. I can’t help but think we are asking the wrong questions or at least asking from the wrong perspective. “What Makes for Great Worship?”—not according to what we might prefer or what makes us feel good, but more of what would God prefer or deserve? What would be more meaningful and acceptable worship toward God?

And if we “didn’t get anything out of the worship service”, then it may

be due to the fact that we didn't contribute much to the worship service.

To the Church: If we aren't reconciled to those within the body of Christ, we may suffer for it.

Mat 5:9 ESV "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

* How might we suffer? God may not receive your worship, until you make things right. And some will think, though certainly not out loud: "so that's it?" "And – that's no big deal – right?"

I believe this refers back to v. 22.

Mat 5:22 ESV But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

It affects our relationship with God. "Well we don't lose our salvation right?" Maybe if we thought we would lose our salvation, more would be honestly attempting to make amends with broken strained relationships within the body of Christ. But however we attempt to explain it or excuse it, take careful note of this connection.

Mat 5:25 ESV Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison.

I believe this to be a bit of a one verse parable. But the parable is clearly meant to illustrate on some level, what happens when brothers are angry and unreconciled. Sisters are hateful and unreconciled. When Christians are unforgiving and unreconciled. Consider it an illustration, a parable, an allegory or a principle that is symbolic. It communicates the immense displeasure of our Almighty, Holy God. It affects our worship toward God, even though we might grade the morning a "9.9" on the performance and emotional scale; but God – and it is His perception of our worship that really makes the difference and not our own – might give us a "0".

We must deal with the issues of our heart

* If we don't deal with the hidden issues of our hearts, God will deal with it for us. Consider the words of the Holy Spirit through Peter.

1Pet. 4:17 ESV For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Some would say, "well God won't judge the church! Christians don't receive judgment!" I don't see this as God threatening to bring down the hammer of judgment upon His people. I view this as God urging the church and/or Christians individually, to judge their own lives and to evaluate their own hearts and motives. It is high time Christians begin to allow God to search our hearts and minds and to reveal and convict us of any and all hidden, secret sins of our hearts, minds, lives, attitudes or motives.

READ 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

1Cor. 11:31-32 ESV (31) But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. (32) But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

Paul is addressing the sinful hearts of the Christians who were abusing the Lord's table. This was not a warning to unbelievers slipping into the worship service and taking communion. It is directed towards Christians who were sinning and whose hearts were not right toward God or others. He urges the church to examine our own lives; to judge our own motives and practices.

CONCLUSION:

So Yes. As Christians – if we are angry and it is unchecked; if we harbor feelings of hatred toward anyone, even for good reason; and if we are unforgiving toward anyone for anything said about us, done to us, or anything else; And if our sin is unconfessed, and if we are unrepentant: then we are living in sin. There is no excuse for it. There is no alibi for it. There is no acceptable place for it.

If we are praying for revival, without confessing our own area of sins, we are praying amiss and are hypocrites.

Eph 4:30-32 ESV **[Christian]** do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (31) **[Christian]** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (32) **[Christian]** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Remember simple anger is not necessarily sin. Allowing anger to simmer into hatred is clearly sin. Hatred that is violence and murder of the heart is clearly sin. Sin that is nurtured or harbored is certainly sin. At any point; at any time; anger is checked, God is pleased to help us through it. At any time, our hatred is repented from and confessed as sin, God forgives and can bring about victory.

In writing to the believing Christians of his day; John writes these words:

1Jn 4:20 ESV If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

But he also offers this assurance for any and all of us:

1Jn 1:8-9 ESV (8) If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2Ch 7:14 ESV if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

“If My people...”; Not the Government; not China; not your opposing political party; not your boss, not your spouse- but if God’s people will ¹humble themselves, and ²pray and ³seek my face and ⁴turn from their evil ways... then I will...”.

Sounds like 4 crucial elements for a great worship service. Humility. Prayer. Seeking God. Repenting and confessing sins. A really great idea of meaningful worship, as well as for the beginning of Revival.

**“What is the Value of the Old Testament Law of God,
in the Life of the Present Day believer in Jesus Christ?”**



SERIES: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way"

Aug.30, 2020

Sermon Title: "Lust: Adultery of the Heart"

Subj: Lust & Adultery

TEXT: Mat. 5:27-31

REVIEW:

Good morning! Today is a Great Day! A Really Great Day. It's a Great Day because we have some great opportunities that Jesus will be teaching us today.

Jesus spoke of a time...

Mat 5:20 ESV For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

The religious leaders made it appear outwardly that they were keeping God's commandments, but inside, they were sinners just as bad as any unbelieving, unregenerate person.

Last week we considered **Anger: Murder of the Heart** and the repercussions of harboring and nurturing anger which results in sin, and thinking it has no affect on our relationship with God.

And we learned that: "...it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God..." (1Pet. 4:17 ESV)

TODAY our lesson is on "**Lust: Adultery of the Heart**".

Let us first look at:

Jas 1:12-15 ESV (12) Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. (13) Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. (14) But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. (15) Then desire when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

James' statement makes us think of the Beatitudes of Jesus. "Blessed is the man...". It teaches that Temptation is not sin. Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, yet he was without sin.(Heb.4:15). We might say

Temptation is the opportunity to sin. Or we might view Temptation as a test of our faith. But Temptation becomes sin when the desires of our leftover sinful nature, desires something that God forbids and we are “drawn away” from God’s path or standard of righteousness and drawn *toward* something that will be sin if we follow through.

Temptation may be a time of great struggle against lust and may trigger a spark of inner sinful desire toward some thing or someone.

Or we may view temptation as the sinful tendencies of our human flesh that remain in any of us; while repentance and the fight against sin, reveals the genuine change Christ has made in every believer’s heart.

A working definition for our lesson today may be: Temptation refers to the temptation itself or the opportunity or desire to sin; the fight against the temptation. A broader reference to temptation could include also; the stumbling into sin, the repentance from sin, the renewal from God for the true believer, and the re-entering into the fight for round 2, then round 3, and round 4. And the fight continues.

INTRODUCTION:

Mar 10:17-22 ESV (17) And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (18) And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. (19) You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" (20) And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." (21) And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "**You lack one thing:** go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." (22) Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Again, Jesus did *not* say: “You know the commandments: do not plant or reap the fields on the 7th year, but let that land rest”. He didn’t say; “Don’t glean the corners of the fields, so the beggars can come and

gather for their needs.” Nor does he tell the man: “:You have heard it said, thou shalt not eat any animal with cloven hoof or with a shell.” He doesn’t address what we would refer to as the agricultural and harvesting Laws. Nor does he address the dietary Laws as important as they were to the Jews. But he addresses what we often refer to as the Moral Laws; that is, how we relate to or dishonor God and how we relate to or dishonor other people.

Jesus taught about The Letter of the law and the Spirit of the Law. The Old Testament Foundation of the Law and the New Testament Fulfillment of the Law.

The ones that were left out were Commands

#1: You shall have no other Gods before me

#2: You shall make no idols

#3: You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God

#4: Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy

AND

#10: You shall not covet, anything your neighbor has.

We know the first and greatest command is to Love the Lord God, and the 2nd is likened unto the first: Love Others as yourself. (Mat.22:37)

Today is a great day because we can learn and grow from what Jesus teaches us in this lessons from his “sermon on the mount”. How can we live right? How can we know how to live or how to think? How can we keep our way pure? How can we know?

We can know, by taking heed to the Standard of God’s Righteousness which reflects the essence of His holiness – that is the Holy Bible, both OT and NT.

Psa 119:9-12 ESV (9) How can a young man **keep his way pure**? By guarding it according to your word. (10) With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! (11) I have stored up your word in my heart, ***that I might not sin against you.*** (12) Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes!

We would do well to pray: “Teach us, in order to keep us from sin, from transgressing His righteous standards and from violating His holy essence what did God give us? His Statues; commands; our OT Law.”

I don’t view the OT Law necessarily as the condemnation from God that tells us why we are going to hell. But rather His communication to us for why we so desperately need a Savior. As present day Christians, we must take careful consideration of the Standard of God’s Righteousness and The essence of His Holiness; that we not transgress His commands nor violate His holiness by our sin; even our hidden or secret sins of the heart.

We think Anger is not so bad. And yet we discover that unchecked, it is worthy of the same punishment as murder. We might think that lust isn’t all that bad. After all, it’s only a thought in my mind, till we discover how God really views it.

Mat 5:27-30 ESV (27) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' (28) But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (29) If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. (30) And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

We continue to learn about the difficulties, the trials, the struggles and the pitfalls of our journey along “the Narrow Way”.

So Jesus teaches us 3 reasons to view every day as a really Great Day.

First: We see that every day is a great day to be reminded of the OT Foundation of God’s Righteous Standards and His Exalted holiness.

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT ADULTERY OF THE HEART

- the Letter of the Law. _____ (Mat.5:27) _____

And as we learned that Anger is Murder of the Heart, likewise Lust, is

adultery of the heart.

Mat 5:27-30 ESV (27) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.((OT FOUNDATION))"

Command and Sentence / *The Foundation of the Letter of the Law*

* Here is God's righteous standard. It is a guideline, a boundary and a marker as to why we are in need of a Savior.

God's Word has always condemned adultery.

Exo 20:14 ESV " (14) "You shall not commit adultery.

The is the commandment regarding the sin of adultery. Adultery was a man and a woman, who engage in sexual activity; one or both being married, but not to each other; and therefore breaking God's standard of righteousness and violating the marriage covenant. And in Leviticus we are given the sentence or punishment for the sin of adultery.

Lev.20:10 ESV "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

It comes across as pretty serious. The punishment of sin was intended to be a notice of the violating of God's holiness, but also a warning and a strong deterrent for others to discourage from further sin.

In John 8, the religious leaders attempt to trap Jesus, but he turns the tables on them. He does not discount the letter of the OT Law, nor its punishment. But he does take opportunity to teach the "spirit of the law" which would have been repentance and restoration.

Jesus and the Woman caught in Adultery / *The Fulfillment of the spirit of the Law*

Joh 8:3-11 ESV (3) The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst (4) they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. (5) Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" (6) This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. (7) And as they continued to ask him, he stood up

and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." (8) And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. (9) But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. (10) Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" (11) She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."]]

The people were looking for Jesus to side with them and to perhaps, condemn the woman to death. But instead he taught forgiveness and repentance. So why was adultery so serious, so as to merit the death sentence? Well here are a few possibilities.

- (1) Adultery was the breaking of an oath and a violation of the marriage covenant, of which God is a witness. And God is not OK with that.
- (2) Marriage in the OT and the NT was representative of the relationship between God and his people.
- (3) In the OT (Is.62:4), God referred to the nation of Israel as "My Delight and My Married".
- (4) IN the NT God refers to the Church as the bride or wife of Jesus Christ. (Eph. & Rev.)
- (5) Those who go after other gods, are referred to as "adulteries" against God. Idolatry was spiritual adultery against God.

In our modern American culture, there is very little genuine concern about the breaking of the marriage vows, sexual immorality in general or the violation of God's holiness in specific.

We would do well if we viewed every day as a great day to be reminded of the OT Foundation of God's Righteous Standards and His Exalted holiness.

SECONDLY: Every day is a great day to be challenged regarding the potential obstacles and hindrances in our relationship with the Lord.

JESUS TEACHES THAT LUST IS ADULTERY OF THE HEART.

This is the Spirit of the Law (Mat.5:28)

* Anger is Murder of the heart and Lust is Adultery of the heart. The issue is purity of the heart; the purity of our desires and of our relationships with one another, as well as with God.

Mat 5:27-30 ESV (27) *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'* **(28) But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**

We may think that we have not shot another person, therefore we are free from the sin of murder. We think that since we have not touched another woman or another man that we are free from the sin of adultery.

Lust can lead to the sin of adultery

* “Lust”: is to intensely desire or to long for something. Lust that results in sin, is to desire and long for that which God has forbidden.

Our desire can stem from our human appetites. Hunger is an appetite and is good. Sexuality is an appetite and was meant for good. But what God designed as pure, Satan intends to pervert every chance he gets.

And lust can develop due to things we see such as pornography, most R-rated movies and television programs. Lust can develop from sexual experimentation at an early age. Lust can grow due to lack of accountability, from cultural or peer pressure. Lust can even be modeled from family training of how single moms or dads conduct themselves around their children. Lust can develop due to lack of Biblical knowledge concerning sins and lack of conviction.

The eye is key when it comes to lust

2Pet. 2:14 ESV They have *eyes* full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!

What we see is perhaps what we were looking for. What we look for is what we desire to see or long for.

Jesus teaches the depth of our sinful propensity

Here we learn that our personal Unrighteousness is more insidious than we had thought and our personal Righteousness is more hopeless than we had thought.

Mat 5:20 ESV For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

This does not imply that we must buckle down and do a better job at keeping the Law. Rather we must allow the Law to point out our unrighteousness, convict us of our sin and point us to the Savior for forgiveness.

After his sin with Bathsheba, King David wrote:

Psa 51:1-7 ESV (1).... **Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. (2) Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!** (3) For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. (4) Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. (5) Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (6) Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. (7) Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Now this is a good example of conviction and grief over our sin. How we need that example today! Create in me a clean heart. For the Present day believer in Jesus, we might pray, “Sensitize the New Heart you have placed within us as your children.”

Ezekiel 36:26 (NIV) ²⁶I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Oh, empower my new heart. Purify my new heart. Stir up my new heart that I might desire the things that you desire.

We would do well if each and every day, we were alert to being challenged regarding the potential obstacles and hindrances in our relationship with the Lord.

THIRDLY: Every day is a great day to address anything in our lives that would be displeasing to God and detrimental to our spiritual journey along “the Narrow Way”.

JESUS BRINGS OUT THE FIGHT REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE TRUE REPENTANCE AND CONFESSION.

* Repentance is conviction and grief over sin and the turning away from sin, or at the very least the fight against sin and its attraction to us.

Mat 5:29-30 ESV (29) If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. (30) And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

Today, we have become so modernized. NO longer is it unusual for unwed men and women to live together. In fact, no longer is it unusual for men and women, who profess faith in Jesus Christ to live together, unmarried.

Barna Report: (April 2016) Practicing Christians (41%) are highly unlikely to believe cohabitation is a good idea.

That implies that 59% of practicing Christians are ok with the idea of men and women living together outside of marriage. And the biggest reason given for people living together? “Testing compatibility”. I am not implying all Christian couples are doing this, but only pointing out that it is no longer unusual, even among Christians.

Probably most today have long forgotten the Puritans, thinking them legalistic, hard core fanatics or “pudes”. But they sure took sin seriously.

Jesus addresses the Severity of sin and necessity of genuine

repentance

Mat 5:29 ESV (29) If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.

This sounds pretty severe action. Most all commentators take this to be hyperbolic speech, or “exaggerated” speech; meaning an illustration that is exaggerated to emphasize the importance of something. The issue of importance being addressed here is being acutely aware of one’s personal temptations to sin and the willingness to address that sin with the purpose of overcoming that sin. If anything, these verses speak to the action taken to fight against sin.

In Genesis, Joseph’s brothers hated him and sold him into slavery to a man named Potiphar.

Fighting against temptaion and lust

*** Gen 39:6-12** ESV So [Potiphar] left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. (7) And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." (8) But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. (9) He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (10) And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her. (11) But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, (12) she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." ***But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house.***

How we need examples of examples like that today!

- (1) There must be the awareness of God’s holiness.
- (2) There must be an acknowledgment of our own sinful propensity.

(3) There must be some level of intent to fight against our fallen, sinful, broken, human sinfulness and its lusts; to take action to avoid temptation that may lead to sin, or to put an end to existing, known, sinful practices.

(4) Joseph doesn't tease around with the situation; he flees the influence.

CONCLUSION:

(1) Fighting against sin, exercises and strengthens our sanctified free will. Fighting the good fight, also exercises and builds our own spiritual strength and discipline. And fighting temptation and sin exercises and deepens our surrender to the Holy Spirit's control.

(2) Also, resistance against any evil of temptation will nurture an increased hatred for sin and lust specifically.

b Fighting lust must include the resistance refraining from providing opportunity for our lustful desires to be fueled.

Rom 13:13-14 ESV (13) Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. (14) But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ***make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.***

I believe there is no better way to have victory over our sinful lusts, than to have close, Godly friends of the same gender, to surround yourselves with and to encourage one another in personal mental, sexual, spiritual purity. Too often we giggle, and joke about sexual issues; or things that sound like they could be taken from a sexual perspective. WE need mature Christian young women who will urge other young Christian ladies, to live modestly and to act maturely, in a manner that displays and implies personal purity.

We need Godly mature young Christian men, to influence and encourage others young men who are younger or less mature in the faith; to speak purity; to act with purity; to think about pure things; and to urge one another along the path of personal purity.

Personal purity is not something to be embarrassed about. But if we surround ourselves with people who help us think, speak and act purity; then we are putting barriers to deter the evil one from gaining a foot hold in your life; and you can be that same barrier, for some other believer.

Do you have another person like that in your life?

Psa 119:9-12 ESV (9) How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. --- (11) I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

This morning in the closing of the Sermon, I read from this article from G.A.W. and these are the abbreviated points.

The BENEFITS OF TEMPTATION; G.A.W. (not further identified)

Grace has to work a great many miracles in us before we get far enough along to heartily sanction the words of St. James, to "count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations." But there is a place of such victory and union with Christ that the soul can really find a source of joy from every trial and temptation through which it has gone.

It is almost impossible for us to see any benefits of being tempted while we are passing through them; the sensibilities are so pierced by fiery darts, the mind is so distracted by evil suggestions, the will is so beset with opposite motives, the rattle of spiritual musketry and smoke of battles obscures the vision from seeing any blessing likely to come out of it. Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them who are properly exercised thereby. Among the benefits of being tried by temptation, we may mention:

1) Resisting any given evil to which the soul is tempted will induce an increased hatred for that sin. The very habit of fighting any particular sin will form a habit of loathing for that sin. It is watched as an old and bitter foe. In long and bitter feuds between families there is not only hatred for the principal agents, but hatred for the children, their relatives, their property. So the persistent fight against some old ruling passion, some old besetting sin, arouses in the soul a universal revenge, not only against the old sin itself, but against all its family relatives, and a jealous hatred to all the insidious steps that lead to that sin. The holiest

saints in all ages have been those who were the most sorely tempted. Surely it is a great blessing to loathe sin, and a still greater blessing to loathe that particular sin that has done us the most damage.

2) Temptation drives us to a deep, serious study of ourselves; it makes us take ourselves all to pieces, to analyze our affections, our wills, our motives, our propensities; it makes us search the quality of our actions, thoughts, words; it makes us scrutinize our real chances for heaven or hell; it makes us dig in solitude to the very secret foundation of our character. Temptation compels us to study the awful nature of sin; it makes us trace the danger of wrong affections, of evil thoughts, of improper words; it opens our eyes to see the hell-fire that stealthily sleeps in so-called little sins. To be thoroughly tempted is the pathway to a thorough knowledge of ourselves and of the malignity of sin.

3) Temptation makes us see our true nothingness and weakness. It withers our cleverness, cauterizes our smartness, teaches us true humiliation and self-abasement. It clips the rattling talkativeness from our tongues, gives us a real, healthy hatred of ourselves, and shows us our demerit in a strong light. It leads us to patient endurance.

When we are first tempted, we chafe and fret; when it comes back still stronger, we whimper and whine; the next time, we try to fight the devil with our fist, we bluster with our will-power against being so assaulted; at the next time, we break down and cry like a child whose Sunday clothes have been bespattered by a bad boy; then we wonder what we shall do; then we half despair of getting complete victory; at last we quiver long-sufferingly in the hand of God, and patiently look to Jesus as an afflicted child looks to its mother's face while its wound is being dressed.

But for the severe temptations, the soul would go skipping along, gloating over its own pretty piety, full of self-admiration. As a severe case of smallpox will prevent a pretty face from standing before a mirror, so terrible temptations prevent holy souls from admiring their own graces.

4) Temptation leads us into real heart-felt sympathy and compassion for others. It takes deep trials to soften and widen the sympathies. Every tree has its special parasites to attack it, and it does seem that severity is the special parasite that fastens itself onto religion

in a human soul. If a cold, condemnatory saint is put through an unexplainable conflict of soul that makes him roll on the floor in agony for hours at a time, while his body is wet with perspiration, when he comes out of that sulphur bath, *if he comes out on the Christ-side*, there will be a tenderness in his judgment and a broadness in his compassion which no camp-meeting hallelujahs could ever impart.[Amen! Editor]
Blessed are they that endure temptation till not only sinful self is purged out, but till the last form of righteous self is gone, and the soul is taken out of its furnaces into a supernatural embrace of the Holy Spirit.

—G.A.W.

[Our Handout for the morning]

Puritan Remedies for Lust

<https://medium.com/@confessional/puritan-remedies-for-lust-948cf5402e29>



SERIES: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: “The Narrow Way”

Sept.6, 2020

Sermon Title: “Grace is Greater”

Subj: Divorce & Remarriage

TEXT: Mat. 5:31-32

REVIEW:

- (1) The Law establishes God’s Standards of Righteousness.
- (2) The Law exalts God’s essence of God’s Holiness.
- (3) The Law illuminates our personal Unrighteousness.
- (4) The Law directs us to our Savior and Source.

INTRODUCTION

READ Matthew 5:17-19

Today we learn that the Law of God Magnifies and Celebrates the grace of God. And in this lesson Jesus focuses on the Value of Marriage and the Family. We begin with the Foundation of Holy Marriage.

THE FOUNDATION OF HOLY MARRIAGE

- Marriage is a battle for the will of God in our most important earthly relationship and for the value of the family.
- Marriage can be the greatest blessing of the worst curse.
- Marriage can be a mutually nurturing, growing and meaningful relationship, or it can become a trap; as one party of the other, desperately looking for a way of escape.
- Marriage can be characterized by pain, fear, guilt, grief and even despair, due to the negative elements or even abuse, within the marriage relationship.
- Or marriage can be filled with hope, joy and challenge, yet with mutual growth, understanding and honor toward both spouses.

Here’s a thought as we focus on today’s topic of Divorce.

“Whatever God means for good, the enemy intends to attach, steal away, put to death or out-right destroy.” The Bible doesn’t refer to the devil as “the destroyer”, for no good reason.(Rev.9:11)

As Jesus focused on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage, I can't help but feel that he would have been very mindful of the sensitivity of those issues that he addressed. Therefore so must we be considerate, and sensitive as we look at this topic which Jesus connects with the Law.

Remember: "The Law of God magnifies and celebrates the grace of God." This morning I will be repeating our Main principle over and over again. That principle is this: **"God's Grace is Greater than our sin, through Christ's Redeeming Remedy on the Cross."** If we get nothing else, we must get this.

THE PERMANENCE OF MARRIAGE

"God's Grace is Greater, through Christ's Redeeming Remedy"

Gen 2:21-24 ESV (21) So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. (22) And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. (23) Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (24) Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. **[OT FOUNDATION]**

v.23) **"bone of my bone; flesh of my flesh"** – speaks not merely to the idea that the woman came from the man; but also to the permanence of the marriage union; implying before it is ever clearly stated; that the two are one and are as incapable of being separated without damage, as a bone or body part was not intended to be removed from the body.

In our present modern times; we have medical technology that allows us to remove and even to replace a faulty organ or worn out joint. Likewise, in our high tech, modernized, rationalized society, we have legal procedures; claims that would allow some to remove a faulty spouse or to replace an unsatisfactory or worn out mate, through divorce. When from heaven's perspective, it was not the will or purpose of God. And

shouldn't that also be our goal and motivation for learning about Marriage from God's Holy Word or from His Standards of Righteousness?

This message is not intended to be corrective in nature, but rather informative and hopefully *preventative*. It is a message that is not connecting with much of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. It may be preached. It may be heard. Notes may be written down. There may be some "Amens" heard in the sanctuaries; but the message is not resonating; its not sinking in; it does not seem to be received and embraced by much of the church today.

- If I asked you: "How many believe that Jesus is the sinless, eternal Son of God?" I'm expecting 100% to raise your hands.

- If I ask you: "How many believe you are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone; irrespective of any meritorious works?" I'm hoping for greater than 75% would raise your hands.

- But if I asked; "How many believe Divorce and remarriage is not an option?" I guess, I might be hesitant to ask that in a public setting.

Especially in the area of Divorce and Remarriage, we must begin by seeking to know God's will in every area of our Christ devoted life. And we must begin with the intended permanence of Marriage.

THE BEGINNING OF MARRIAGE

Actually Prior to marriage is where it must begin. That is the will of God. It is Foundationally crucial that we establish that; that we understand that this is the will of God regarding the marriage covenant.

And we remember: **"God's Grace is Greater, through Christ's Redeeming Remedy"** It is Foundational for a believing Christian to understand this: **Marrying an unbeliever with the hopes of winning**

that unbelieving spouse to Christ after you marry them, is not an option in Scripture.

2Cor. 6:14-15 ESV **Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.** For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? (15) What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

This must become the Foundational Conviction through which we filter every other earthly relationship. This is not only referring to marriage but to any kind of inappropriate alliance, union or covenant between believers in Jesus and unbelievers. This is a principle meant to affect all relationships, whether it be business or marriage. When it comes to marriage, far too many date outside the faith, get emotionally attached, develop a bond, then eventually marry outside the faith and outside the will of God.

ILL) “Unequally yoked”: Literally - Unbalanced coupling of work animals / beasts of burden; strange connections or alien bonds in legal transactions; imbalance weights on the scales of justice:

Deu 22:9-11 ESV (9) "You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole yield be forfeited, the crop that you have sown and the yield of the vineyard. (10) You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. (11) You shall not wear cloth of wool and linen mixed together.

This is the **OT FOUNDATION** of the Law. The strict letter of the Law. It represented a holy life; dedicated to God; separated from the unbelieving world around them. So when Paul refers to this in 2Cor.6:14, he is sharing the OT FOUNDATION of the Law and applying it as a **NT FULFILLMENT** of the Law, in the context of the work and ministry of Christ, in the life of the church.

In the Marriage relationship:

2Cor. 6:14-15 ESV **Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.** For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what

fellowship has light with darkness? (15) What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

“Well he’s such a good provider.” “She’s such a really great gal.” And while hoping to change the person or eventually win the person to Christ, they marry, entering into a union, bond or yoke or marriage covenant - regardless of how much prayer may have gone into it - that is unequalled or imbalanced. It is a union between light and darkness. Doesn’t say the person is not a good person with great qualities. But it is referring to God’s people, marrying outside their faith in Jesus Christ, forming what might be eternal bonds with one who is outside the kingdom of God.

This is the will of God in Christian marriage. How many testimonies have we had in this church? And some do get saved, they may eventually, receive Christ. Nevertheless, the end, does not justify the means or getting there.

This message is not meant to be a rebuke or correction, but rather informative, and perhaps preventative; that we might know and teach to our families and children. This is the will of God, in Christian marriage.

So, **“God’s Grace is Greater, through Christ’s Redeeming Remedy”**

Marrying an unbeliever and then realizing you have sinned, does not allow for divorce.

1Co 7:12-13 ESV (12) To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, **he should not divorce** her. (13) If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.

“2 wrongs don’t make a right”.

From the very beginning Divorce was not to be an option

I believe some actually go into marriage, with the attitude that; “well if it doesn’t work out, we can always get a divorce.”

Mat 19:3-6 ESV And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" (4) He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, (5) and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? (6) So they are no longer two but one flesh. **THEREFORE, What God has joined together, let not man separate.**"

Jesus refers to Gods initial act and purpose in creation. HE takes the FOUNDATION of the Letter of the OT Law and further clarifies with the NT FULFILLMENT of the spirit of the law: That is, we are intended to be permanently united and linked to the spouse of our marriage covenant; And Jesus further emphasizes that “what God has joined together, let no man; no man; IN the Hebrew it means “NO Nobody” should be separated in Divorce according to Genesis.

Being equally yoked before God in holy marriage, is the clear and perfect will of God. And Divorce is not intended to be an option.

THE PRESERVATION OF HOLY MARRIAGE

So we are emphasizing: **“God’s Grace is Greater than our sin, through Christ’s Redeeming Remedy on the cross.”**

Jesus’ teaching on Divorce and Remarriage

* the Dangers of misusing Scripture.

Mat 5:31-32 ESV "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' (32) But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

It is important that we establish the conviction that:

Divorce is NOT an option from God's perspective

* What Jesus states here, is probably not what Scripture says, but what the readers of the Scripture tried to make it say. Scripture Twisting. Jesus was referring to what Gods' word said in the OT Law found in Deut.24.

Deu 24:1-4 ESV (1) "When a man takes a wife and marries her, *if* then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and *if* he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and *if* she departs out of his house, (2) and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, (3) and *if* the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, (4) ***then* her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD.** And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

It does not say a Man is free to divorce his wife for anything as long as he sends her away with a written document. But in fact the opposite. Deut. 24:1-4 refers to what was evidently taking place in Jesus day, but was also taking place in the very early years of the Jewish people. They were in a habit of marrying a woman, then finding her not to be pleasing, and divorcing her, and seeking another to remarry. In the divorce, they would write a letter or certificate of so called charges against the woman, and some felt that was adequate means for the man to divorce a woman.

And when Jesus refers to this, he was addressing the false idea that "Moses had authorized or even commanded the people to divorce, if they wrote the "certificate", as their excuse due to the charges of the wife's failure to measure up. But this text does not authorize Divorce, but rather describes the tangled mess that Divorce can present if remarriage occurs.

This was kind of like a hall pass in high school. Some, certainly never myself – but some would write a hall pass and forge a teachers name to it and that was their written excuse to be out of class, if they were to get caught in the halls. The certificate of divorce was their “written excuse” why it was “acceptable” for them to divorce.

But Jesus makes this clarification or even correction, as it seems the statement was a misrepresentation of what “Moses” said and what God meant.

Mat 5:31-32 ESV "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' (32) **But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.**

He says, “not only is it wrong to divorce, but it is even a greater sin to **remarry** under those circumstances.

So: “God’s Grace is Greater, through Christ’s Redeeming Remedy”

Divorce occurs due to the sinfulness of one or both in the marriage relationship

* Yet God’s grace is Greater through Christ’s Redeeming Remedy!

Mar 10:2-12 ESV (2) And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "**Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?**" (3) He answered them, "What did Moses command you?"(4) They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." (5) And Jesus said to them, "**Because of your hardness of heart** he wrote you this commandment. (6) **But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'** (7) 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, (8) and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh.

This is a quote from God’s OT Law; the FOUNDATION of the Law; the Strict letter of the Law, yet it refers to a misquoted tradition, rather than the truth of Scripture.

However Jesus does not end there with the Foundational, Letter of the Law. He Clarifies that with the NT FULFILLMENT of the Spirit of the Law.

v.5) “because of the hardness of heart”, he wrote you the command.

(i.) Jesus makes it clear that divorce occurs as a result of sin from one or the other or perhaps both in the marriage.; “Because of **your hardness of heart**”.

Because of the *sinfulness* of your own hearts. The Old Testament is filled with God supporting Marriage and denouncing Divorce. Yet it was always in the context where Divorce was flippant, frivolous and rampant. The fact was not that the husband just won’t listen to the wife, or that the wife is such a nag to the husband. Jesus clarifies the problem, that somewhere in this process of divorce, the root cause is sin in the human heart.

(ii.) Jesus makes clear that Divorce is not the will of God.
(Mk.10:6 “But from the beginning it was not so...” - What God has joined together, let no man separate.” We have to establish that. Or perhaps we must re-establish that. The church used to hold to that, just as they would hold to the deity of Christ or salvation by grace through faith. But in our day, so many of those Truths we used to hold to, have been compromised and laid aside as old fashioned, irrelevant or too Old Testamentish.

So if I asked; “How many believe Divorce and remarriage is not an option in the Bible?” Certainly the Bible never says, “Here is option #2. Or Here is plan “B”. But what God does make clear is, because of the hardness of human hearts, and the sinfulness of the hearts of mankind and even the religious people of God – this is allowed and occurring without any other excuse than because of sin.

(iii.) More than answer the question, Jesus describes the outcome of divorce if someone remarries.

[Mar 10:11-12 ESV (11) And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, (12) and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

For what we may view as a necessary step for our convenience. God's word further clarifies....

(iv.) Divorce is violence....

Mal 2:13-16 ESV (13) And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. (14) But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. (15) Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be *faithless*** to the wife of your youth. (16) "For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with VIOLENCE, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be ***faithless***."**

v.16) "violence" oppressive injustice:

"Faithless" – v.14, 15, 16: treachery; to pillage or lay waste; remove anything of value; "I just don't love her anymore". "He's just not compatible with me anymore." These excuses are like treachery in the marriage relationship, and are as acts of violence against one another and against their covenant before God.

IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR ME?

* How should I proceed once I've been divorced?

Remain where you are, as you are

1Co 7:10-11 ESV (10) To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (11) (but if she

does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

(i.)* If you are divorced and remarried, then remain as you are and start fresh with God.

(ii.) If divorced and you are not remarried and your former spouse has not remarried, **pray about being reconciled**, for the sake of God's will. This is certainly not what most people would want to hear.

(iii.) If you are married to an unbeliever, remain as you are.

* Realizing you made a mistake, then divorcing your spouse, does not make things right but only complicates your situation.

1Co 7:12-13 ESV (12) To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, **he should not divorce** her. (13) If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.

If you have experienced what the Scriptures are referring to here, and you are convicted, then seek God's forgiveness, cleansing and start where you are, devoted to Christ to follow the Lord's will.

I hope we are seeing the focus of Jesus teaching on these issues of the Law. It is to dispel the idea that if we are just better people, we will be able to keep the Law of God and be righteous. But the opposite is the case.

CONCLUSION: "Grace is Greater: Christ's Redeeming Remedy"

The Law establishes our sin, but at the same time magnifies the grace of God. Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound.

Rom 5:18-21 ESV (18) Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. (19) For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made

sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (20) Now the **law came in to increase** the trespass, ***but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more***, (21) so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Whenever God's standard of Righteousness points out any sin in our lives; whether anger, or murder, or lust or adultery or divorce or remarriage and adultery; or lying or stealing... whatever our sin - God's grace is greater. Whatever our transgression - the blood of Jesus Christ is our **Redeeming Remedy**.

Rejoice in His grace. God does not condemn the repentant. He is on the side of the humble and near to those of a contrite heart. Your life is not over. Your ministry is not over. God still has a plan for your life.

2Co 12:9 ESV But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

His grace is greater than our past. His grace is sufficient for our present and our future.

"God's Grace is Greater than our sin, Christ's Redeeming Remedy at the cross."

SERIES: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way" Sept.20, 2020

Sermon Title: "God's Grace is Greater" pt.2

Subj: Divorce & Remarriage

TEXT: Mat. 5:31-32

REVIEW: Q: What Value is the OT Law, in the life of the NT believer?

READING

Mat 5:17-32 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (21) "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' (22) But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. (23) So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, (24) leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (25) Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. (26) Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. (27) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' (28) But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (29) If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. (30) And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. (31) "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' (32) But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery,

and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

REVIEW:

- The Law establishes Gods' standard of righteousness.
- The Law exalts God's essence of Holiness.
- The Law illuminates our own personal unrighteousness.
- The Law celebrates and magnifies the grace of God and drives us to seek righteousness outside of ourselves.
- The Law is not something we can measure up to, but is that which we will be measured by.

Rom 3:20-23 ESV (20) For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. (21) But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it-- (22) the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: (23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

So we learn that the OT Law of God also celebrates and Magnifies the grace of God. Living righteously and experiencing God's grace is not about looking inward, so as to reach into our own inner resources and strength. But is about looking Upward to our only sources of hope and righteousness in Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is not about buckling down and doing a better job of becoming self-righteous, but is all about the Grace of God being Greater than our sin, through the Redeeming Remedy of Christ's perfect life and His shed blood on the cross.

"God's Grace is Greater, through Christ's Redeeming Remedy"

*** THE FOUNDATION OF HOLY MARRIAGE**

- Marriage is a battle for the will of God in our most important earthly relationship and for the value of the family. But it is a battle worth fighting to win.

- It is not a battle between who is right or who is wrong. It is not a fight to lay blame, but to keep Satan from separating what God has joined together.
- Marriage can be characterized by pain, fear, guilt, grief and even despair,
- Or marriage can be filled with hope, joy and understanding toward both spouses.

Remember: “The Law of God magnifies and celebrates the grace of God.” This morning we will be repeating our Main principle over and over again. That principle is this: **“God’s Grace is Greater than our sin, through Christ’s Redeeming Remedy on the Cross.”** If we get nothing else, we must get this.

We previously learned...

1) THE PERMANENCE OF MARRIAGE

Gen 2:23-24 ESV (23) Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

v.23) **“bone of my bone; flesh of my flesh”** and a man holding “fast to his wife”, both speaks of the permanence of the marriage relationship. It speaks of the two being joined as one and are as incapable of being separated, as a bone or body part was not intended to be removed from the body.

2) THE PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

Actually Prior to marriage is where it must begin. That is the will of God. It is Foundationally crucial that we establish that; that we understand that this is the will of God regarding the marriage covenant.

2Cor. 6:14-15 ESV (14) **Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.** For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? (15) What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

Before Marriage, there must be a seeking of the Will of God for the one

He would have us marry, within our Christian faith. This must become the Foundational Conviction through which we filter every other earthly relationship.

3) THE PRESERVATION OF HOLY MARRIAGE

So we are emphasizing: **“God’s Grace is Greater than our sin, through Christ’s Redeeming Remedy on the cross.”** IN all things we experience in marriage, God’s grace is sufficient for every trial and every circumstance.

Today...

I. JESUS’ TEACHING IS ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Mat 5:31-32 ESV (31) "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' (32) But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman, commits adultery.

It is important that we establish the conviction that God does not desire divorce, and that greater problems can result from it.

Also, it may be worth noting, that this point of Divorce and Remarriage is not a stand along point, sort of separated from the other individual references to the law. Instead many commentators believe the topic of divorce and remarriage is a continuation of the Lust and Adultery from vs.27-30. Verse 31 then begins with a word that is not translated in many versions of the Bible. But v.31, begins with a word that can be translated as “moreover or Furthermore” as though v.31-32 were continuation from the previous verses pertaining to lust and adultery.

* What Jesus states here is what God’s word stated in the OT Law found in Deut.24.

Deu 24:1-4 ESV (1) "When a man takes a wife and marries her; **IF** then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and **if** he writes her a **certificate of divorce** and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and **if** she departs out of his house, (2) and **if** she goes and becomes another man's wife, (3) and **if** the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or **if** the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, (4) **THEN her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD.** And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.

Six “ifs” in this “Cause and Effect” example. The religious leaders seemed to have come to the conclusion that divorce was allowed or even condoned, as long as they gave a certificate of divorce to the wife. The Law does not say “a man is free to divorce his wife for anything as long as he sends her away with a written document”. But in fact the opposite. Deut. 24:1-4 refers to what was evidently taking place in Jesus day, but was also taking place in the very early years of the Jewish people.

They were in a habit of marrying a woman, then finding her not to be pleasing, and divorcing her, and seeking another to remarry. In the divorce, they would write a letter or certificate of so called charges against the woman, and some feel that was adequate reason for the man to divorce a woman. But divorce led to adultery, if the divorced person(s) ever remarried.

And while we might see the adultery, that resulted from remarriage to be the greater issue to us – Jesus was actually going after those who were perverting God’s standard of Righteousness, by mocking the holy covenant of marriage and causing the divorced women to re marry and commit adultery. Yet so were the men guilty of adultery as they were also remarrying some new bride and even causing that new bride to become an adulteress.

Do we see how tangled and complicated this had become? And can we see how much the same thing often occurs in our own time?

So when Jesus refers to this, he was addressing the false idea that “Moses had authorized or even commanded the people to divorce, if they wrote the “certificate”, as their excuse due to the charges of the wife’s failure to measure up. But this text does not authorize Divorce, but rather describes the tangled mess that Divorce can present, if remarriage occurs.

So Jesus makes this clarification or even correction, as it seems their statement was a misrepresentation of what “Moses” said and what God meant. He says, “not only is it wrong to divorce, but it is even a greater wrong to remarry under those circumstances.

Mat 19:4-5 ESV (4) He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, (5) and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?"

That is the actual teaching of the FOUNDATION of the OT Law, from Genesis. Then Jesus gives His definitive answer as the FULFILLMENT of that law. The Law gave the letter, but Jesus goes on to give the Spirit for which it was intended.

Mat 19:4-6 ESV (6) So they are no longer two but one flesh. **What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."**

That is the will of God in the issue of Divorce. Divorce is not an option from God’s perspective.

Yet: “God’s Grace is Greater, through Christ’s Redeeming Remedy.”

Jesus goes on to state that **Divorce occurs due to the sinfulness of someone’s heart in the marriage relationship**

Mat 19:7-9 ESV (7) They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" (8) He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, **but from the beginning it was not so.** (9) And I

say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

v.8) "because of the hardness of heart", he wrote you the command.

(i.) Jesus makes it clear that divorce occurs as a result of sin from one or the other or perhaps sometimes, both in the marriage. Note in v.5) . Because of the *sinfulness* of your own hearts. How complicated and grievous it must have been for Moses.

The Old Testament is sprinkled with God supporting Marriage and denouncing Divorce. It was not directed toward people who were suffering, or abused, or cheated on. Etc... but toward those, at a time where divorce as was flippant, frivolous and rampant. The fact was not that the husband – “just won’t listen to the wife” – or that “the wife is such a nag to the husband”. Jesus clarifies the problem, that somewhere in this process of divorce, the root cause is the state of someone’s heart.

(ii.) Jesus makes clear that Divorce is not the will of God.

(Mat.19:8) “*But from the beginning it was not so...*” - What God has joined together, let no man separate.” We have to establish that. Or perhaps we must re-establish that. The church used to hold to that, just as they would hold to the deity of Christ or salvation by grace through faith. But in our day, so many of those Truths we used to hold to, have been compromised and laid aside as old fashioned, irrelevant or too Old Testamentish.

So if I asked; “How many believe Divorce and remarriage is not an option in the Bible?” Certainly the Bible never says, “Here is option #2”. Or “Here is plan B”.

But what God does make clear is, because of the hardness of human hearts, and the sinfulness of the hearts of mankind and even the religious people of God – this is allowed without any other excuse but because of sin;

(iii.) More than answer the question, Jesus describes the outcome of divorce if someone remarries.

Mat 19:9 ESV (9) And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, **commits adultery.**"

For what we may view as a necessary step for our convenience. God's word clarifies the further problems divorce creates.

It is interesting in **Mat.5:29**, if your right eye causes you to lust or stumble, then pluck it out. In other words, do what it takes to keep sinning with lust and adultery of the heart.

Then in **v.30** if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off: Again, the idea is to do what it takes to put lust and adultery of the heart to rest.

But then in **v31-32** Jesus addresses Divorce and Remarriage, by pointing out how it makes the separated parties adulterers if they remarry. So the idea is that the act of divorcing the wife or "putting the wife away" or "sending her away"; rather than getting rid of something to keep yourself from adultery. Keep that *something*, that is your wife, in order to keep you both from remarrying and committing adultery.

God makes it pretty clear that Divorce is not an option. In fact he states that Divorce is as an act of violence to the spouse....

(iv.) Divorce is violence....

Mal 2:16 ESV (16) "For the man who does not love his wife but **divorces** her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with **VIOLENCE**, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be ***faithless***."

v.16) "violence" refers to oppressive injustice.

"Faithless" – v.14, 15, 16: refers to treachery; to pillage or lay waste; remove anything of value. "I just don't love her anymore". "He's just not compatible with me anymore." None of these are valid reasons to get a divorce from a Biblical point of view.

II. IS THERE ANY "ACCEPTABLE" REASON TO BE DIVORCED?

* **No Divorce is Acceptable.** But.. there are certain circumstances given in Scripture, whereby Divorce may be “*permissible*”, but does not

The case of Abandonment

* **Abandonment:** Divorce is not acceptable but “*permissible*” for the sake of the victim.

1Cor. 7:15 ESV But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not **enslaved**. God has called you to peace.

In the context of abandonment, you are not obligated to fight for the person to stay, nor necessarily to refrain from the proceedings. But if the unbelieving spouse leaves, then you are not obligated by God’s law to remain married. But this does not state that Remarriage is allowed.

The Case of Adultery

Mat. 19:9 ESV (9) And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

This doesn’t mean sexual immorality / adultery is the authorization to go ahead and get a divorce. But Jesus was stating that if your spouse commits adultery, then you get divorced, then remarry; you are committing adultery and cause the person you marry to commit adultery.

Scripture doesn’t state here, “You cannot divorce”, but does describe the further problems, complications and sin, that Divorce can cause, through remarriage.

See how tangled it gets. Just because you get a divorce and get it in a written certificate, or even if legally the blame is on your spouse, in God’s eyes, marriage doesn’t just... end there.

IT gets tangled. It gets complicated. You mean, if I get divorced, I am to remain single??

Mat 19:9-12 ESV (9) And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." (10) The disciples said to him, "**If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.**"

Exactly the point.

Or at least be certain; and prepare to endure whatever the devil may put in your path. The only hint of exception God gives is in the case of Adultery.

Abandonment. Adultery. And Abuse

The Case of Abuse

* I would encourage anyone who is being abused by their spouse; especially if it is violent; ***I'd encourage them to separate***; grab the kids, and run to a safe place. The ¹purpose would be to separate *temporarily*, for the sake of safety; for the ²purpose of allowing the other spouse to come to his/her senses; Always with ³the prayer for repentance and the purpose of reconciliation. But talk to a pastor or strong Christian about your situation. Try to work things out with your spouse from a distance at first. Seek help or counsel, but with the goal of possible reconciliation.

1Cor. 7:10-11 ESV To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (11) (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be *reconciled* to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

* But I would also encourage the person to not reconcile too fast, but to seek help, and look for genuine signs of repentance and changed behavior and even accountability, before reconciling the relationship. And unfortunately many times, that is just simply not possible.

The only reason Scripture allows remarriage is in the death of the spouse, then the spouse can remarry. (1Cor.7:39). Abandonment. Adultery. Abuse. Divorce could be "permissible", but does not advocate remarriage.

I spoke with a gentleman this week who was telling me of the grievous

situation with his son getting a divorce. When he finished telling me the story, he said, “Jeff. Marriage is tough. Marriage is very tough. But Divorce is tougher!”

Yet, God’s Grace is Greater, through Christ’s Redeeming Remedy.

CONCLUSION: “God’s Grace is Greater than our sin, through Christ’s Redeeming Remedy on the cross”

* The Law of God is clear. But our relationships can become so very complicated. Every person must work through these issues, together with God and do what they believe to be best and is closest to God’s will, as humanly possible.

The OT Law establishes our sin, but at the same time magnifies the grace of God. Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound.

Rom 5:20-21 ESV (20) Now the *law came in to increase* the trespass, ***but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,*** (21) so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Yet, God’s Grace is Greater, through Christ’s Redeeming Remedy.

Whenever God’s standard of Righteousness points out any sin in our lives; whether anger, or murder, or lust or adultery or divorce or remarriage and adultery; or lying or stealing... whatever our sin - God’s grace is greater. Whatever our transgression - the blood of Jesus Christ is *our Redeeming Remedy.*

Rejoice in His grace. God does not condemn the repentant. He is on the side of the humble and near to the repentant.

“The Lord is close to the broken hearted,
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Ps. 34:18)

Your life is not over. Your ministry is not over. God still has a plan for

your life.

2Co 12:9 ESV But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

His grace is greater than our past. His grace is sufficient for our present and our future. *"God's Grace is always Greater, through Christ's Redeeming Remedy".*

"Moving On" after Divorce is all about your surroundings and the lingering hindrances. "Moving on" does not refer to moving on to the next relationship, but rather *moving away* from hindrances and *moving on toward* God's prescribed Biblical step for recovering from divorce.

Hindrance #1) Anger: Be careful not to allow those around you who take your side and speak disrespectfully or derogatorily about your former spouse. They may express how you feel and it may cause you to feel supported, knowing they understand what you are going through. HOWEVER, that kind of input can be the very input that causes you to fail to work through and conquer your anger, and keep you in misery.

INSTEAD: Surround yourself with those who are empathetic toward your situation, but offer positive, Biblical input that help strengthen you, and help you move forward, through and eventually out of the pit of anger. It can become all-consuming.

Hindrance #2) Grief: Divorce is loss. As you would grieve the loss of a parent or a child; Divorce is the loss or the death of a very important relationship. The person may think: "What a relief, now that that is finally over". But It is still loss and is still extremely grievous.

INSTEAD: Realize that realistically, as in all areas of grief; the grief and sense of loss doesn't quickly fade. It may always be with you, but over time will become more manageable, as your emotions and thoughts begin to stabilize, and you enter into a new "Normalcy", under the sufficiency of His grace.

Hindrance #3) Shame: I once read: “Don’t receive criticism from those whom you would not seek advice.” So be careful with whom you share the details about your experience. Be cautious of those who immediately try to analyze your problem and tell you what you should do or should have done; or how you should feel.. While it is easier said than done, we sometimes allow the critical and blaming words of others to color our perspective on life, on ourselves and on our troubles. Some have a way of heaping blame, when they don’t know the whole story.

Pro 18:13 ESV If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.

So be careful who you allow to speak into your situation, especially your trials, such as divorce.

INSTEAD: Look to surround yourself with those who will listen and pray and support. Take note of those who are quick to listen and slow to speak. Receive input only from those who have proven themselves trust-worthy.

(4) General Precautions: Just simply put: be careful who you share the secrets of your trials with. Not everyone knows how to keep a secret nor how to exercise discretion regarding what they have been told and may pass on to others- many others.

1Tim.5:13 ESV Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.

INSTEAD: If you are a woman; seek out other solid, Godly, Christian women who can control their tongues and who demonstrate spiritual maturity and trustworthiness.

If you are a man; seek out another man, who is Godly, who has demonstrated spiritual maturity by how he talks about others, or how he doesn’t talk about others.

Resources: on the Missions Counter in the foyer. Also these documents can be accessed on our church's webpage. www.ChristEFCA.org

- (1) Divorce and Remarriage: John Piper, (a position paper)
- (2) Divorce and Remarriage, Dr. James Dobson.
- (3) "The Four Seasons of Marriage", Dr Gary Chapman.

“The Narrow Way”

The Law of God

Part 4



The Sermon on the Mount, taken from the words of Jesus
Matthew chapters 5-7

**“What is the Value of the Old Testament Law of God,
in the Life of the Present Day believer in Jesus Christ?”**

“Enter by the narrow gate...”
Matthew 7:13a

“Introduction”

“You have heard it said...” –Mat.5:21

“But I say to you...” – Mat.24:22

At no time is Jesus devaluing the Law or discounting our Old Testament. When He makes these statements, He is (1) addressing issues where the religious leaders may have been supporting or keeping that particular command, but still sinning in some other way related to that command. (such as: Anger & Murder). (2) Or he was addressing a misunderstanding of a particular law and a misrepresentation of God’s perspective on an issue, law or sin. (such as: Divorce & Remarriage) (3) Or He was addressing and correcting something they were teaching and presenting as the Law of God, when in reality it was the ideas of men which had been allowed to seep into the Jewish religious culture and considered and promoted as Law. (such as: Love your neighbor & Hate your enemies)

Jesus never abolished the law, relaxed the commandments nor condoned the religious leaders inappropriate handling of God’s Holy Word, the Law. He did clarify, correct and demonstrated that the Law was actually tougher to keep than we had previously thought.

SERIES: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way" Sept.27, 2020

Sermon Title: "Promises Promises"

Subj: Divorce & Remarriage

TEXT: Mat. 5:33-37

REVIEW: THE LAW OF: The Law of God establishes God's standard of Righteousness, to which the whole world will be held accountable.

REVIEW:

Mat 5:17-32 ESV (17) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (18) For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. (19) Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Mat.5:31-32 (31) "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' (32) But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Mat 5:33-37 ESV (33) "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' (34) But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, (35) or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. (36) And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. (37) Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

The Law establishes the Standards of God's righteousness.

The Law exalts the Essence of God's Holiness

The Law illuminates our own personal unrighteousness.

The Law celebrates and magnifies the grace of God and drives us to seek righteousness outside of ourselves.

The Law is not something we can Live up to, but is that which we will be measured by.

Rom 3:10, 20 (ESV) as it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; (20) For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

1) The Law of God communicates how things in God's Kingdom of Heaven operate and how we, as citizens of that Kingdom, are to live and conduct ourselves.

2) And the Law declares the authority of God, as the King of that Kingdom.

INTRODUCTION:

As we continue through the Sermon on the Mount and this section of the Law; This is specifically pertaining to the swearing of an oath and taking of a vow. It is important to realize that if and when we take an oath, we are dealing with things and situations that we have no ultimate control over. We may have good intentions of carrying it out, but we are not in full control of the future or of the events around us.

Pro 20:24 ESV A man's steps are from the LORD; how then can man understand his way?

Taking an oath implies we are in control and we are setting out to accomplish our own plan and purpose. But if we surrender our intent and plans to God; it indicates we are dependent upon Him and trusting Him, as we are submitting all our plans over to His Lordship, to evaluate, and even to change or redirect, as HE sees fit, according to His plane and His purpose.

Today's lesson from Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount is focused on the swearing of oaths and taking vows.

First we will consider...

SWEARING AND THE VOW OF MARRIAGE (Mat.5:33-37)

Last two weeks we looked at God's Law that addresses Divorce, which God described as an act of violence and unfaithfulness toward the spouse of your covenant. Covenant being a solemn agreement, promise or a vow.

From the Jewish Tanakh

Mal 2:14-16 JPS (14) ... the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt **treacherously**, though she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. (15) And not one hath done so who had exuberance of spirit! For what seeketh the one? a seed given of God. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal **treacherously** against the wife of his youth. (16) For I hate putting away, saith the LORD, the God of Israel, and him that covereth his garment with **violence**, saith the LORD of hosts; therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not **treacherously**.

The breaking of the marriage vow was described as Treachery, and an act of violence. And from the breaking of the covenant of Marriage through Divorce (Mat.5:31-32), Jesus now speaks directly about the Swearing of Oaths and breaking vows.

This was directed to the Jewish people, 2,000 yrs ago.

The Jewish People

* Jesus is not speaking about swearing, as in cursing; but in swearing an oath or taking a vow to, seemingly intensify a promise or agreement, in order to make it more binding, more believable or more certain.

Mat 5:33-37 ESV (33) "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' (34) But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either

by heaven, for it is the throne of God, (35) or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. (36) And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. (37) Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil. [cp. Mat.23:20-22]

For the early Jewish people, a “covenant” was intended to be an unbreakable agreement between 2 or more people and not just in the context of marriage. And it was a blood covenant. An animal was killed and the dead bleeding carcass was cut completely in two; and the two parties would walk through, or between those two pieces of dead animals,

Scholars are divided on the original meaning; either referring to “cutting”, as in cutting an animal in two, or it meant “Binding”; which is what was being symbolized as the two parties passed between the two halves, thus being bound together as one, in an agreement, or alliance.

Dr Thomas Constable: God has always intended simple truthfulness in speech as well as lifelong marriage. The rabbis had developed an elaborate system of oaths. They taught that swearing by God's name was binding, but swearing by heaven and earth was not binding. Swearing toward Jerusalem was binding, but swearing by Jerusalem was not. In some cases they even tried to deceive others by appealing to various authorities in their oaths. [

Swearing an oath was an attempt to emphasize the weighty matter of an agreement, and to persuade others to take them at their word.

What about oaths in our cultures?

In America

In marriages today, I often wonder, if these people who are being married and are repeating their vows have ever really stopped to consider the depth and weight of their words. It is a swearing of an oath, with all of Heaven as a witness.

Perhaps most traditional weddings say something to the effect of:

"I, _____, take thee, _____, to be my wedded wife//husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, ¹for better, for worse, ²for richer, for poorer, ³in sickness and in health, ⁴to love, honor and to cherish, ⁵till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto ⁶I pledge thee my faith."

¹for better, for worse: We are usually counting on the "better" outweighing the "worse". Bob Moeller of "The Marriage Minute", used to say, "For better, for worse, ***for Keeps***".

²for richer, for poorer: that is throughout financial trials and blessings.

³in sickness and in health: In caring for your spouse or being cared for by your spouse, its all a part of this lifelong commitment.

⁴to love, honor and to cherish: At every stage, and in every circumstance.

⁵till death do us part: there is the intended duration.

⁶I pledge thee my faith." – I think many getting married, tend to think of that more like the "pledge of allegiance", where one is just stating out loud they are marrying, rather than viewing it as the swearing an oath, and entering into a covenant with your spouse to be.

(i.) Cowboys and Hillbillies – I'm not a cowboy but, I do have some distant relatives who may have been hillbillies, But Cowboys and Hillbillies were known to strike up a deal and would spit in their own hands and then shake hands on the deal. And nasty as it was, it was intended to imply; "this is a binding agreement, that neither one of us will ever go back on."

(i.) The Red Man, at least as they were depicted in the old Westerns– would take a knife and cut their hands or arms, so that blood was drawn. And then they would rub that bleeding area together with the other one, in order to seal an agreement. It was a serious pact, through which they became "blood brothers".

It seems that all cultures have their traditions that attempt to emphasize promises or make agreements seem more more binding.

TO SWEAR AN OATH IN GENERAL

Mat 5:34-37 ESV (34) But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, (35) or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. (36) And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. (37) Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

Oaths In Jewish Life

Deu 23:23 KJV That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, **which thou hast promised with thy mouth.**

In this passage, breaking a vow seems to be equated with lying, which would be breaking the 9th Commandment.

Lev 19:12 KJV And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou **profane the name of thy God:** I am the LORD.

Here in Lev.19, swearing falsely or breaking a vow, is mentioned as profaning the name of the Lord, which would be a violation of the 3rd Commandment. Do not take the name of the Lord in vain.

To God, an Oath, or promise or a vow was serious business. God's promises are His word and we call it a promise.

An Oath In a court of law today

Used to, you'd Put your hand on top of the Bible, and "swear to tell the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth, so help you God". And if it was discovered that you lied under oath; it was the crime of ***perjury.***

Some places have taken God out of the oath.

Heb 6:16 ESV For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation.

An Oath, is swearing by something greater than either person who is making the oath. The idea is there was an indisputable witness of God Almighty, in their midst, who was an unseen but present witnesses. It was the One upon whose name they swore by, whom they were to be held accountable.

There is a witness higher than the one who swears to which all parties are accountable. It is a bit ironic to me, that having taken God's name out of that oath – then what good is the oath? When God is removed from that, then there is nothing or no one greater to swear by to whom one might be held accountable.

What is the motivation to keep the oath, if accountability to God, the Almighty witness, is removed?

We are familiar with oaths In Everyday Life

* Growing up we learned how to take oaths make promises.

(i.) Superstitions:

*As **KIDS:** we learned how to take an oath. There was the “Pinkie Promise” where two people locked their pinkie fingers and made a promise, indicating it to be something that would last forever.

“Cross my heart, hope to die, stick a needle in my eye.” That made your promise really binding. It made others think you really meant business and that you would never break that promise, no matter what.

But not only did we learn to take an oath, we also learned how to break an oath and lie our way out of it. “Ha Ha. I had my Fingers crossed.”. And then they'd laugh at you for not having any more sense, than to believe them.

It wasn't funny if you were on the receiving end of it. It taught that you could not believe, or trust the person who said such things.

And then we grow up... and sometimes those things stuck with us. Some never grow out of that kind of disregard for honesty and trust-

worthiness. We learned how to fake a promise because we knew how to break a promise. Growing up has a was of training us to be more deceptive and lessens the value of a promise.

Why do we swear?

(ii.) Gives emphasis to our claims or promises

(1) * “I swear on my mother’s grave”: What does that even mean?

(2) “I swear to God: It profanes the name of the Lord and is so common, it is irreverent. Some feel that adds validity to the promise and makes them more believable. But mostly it is just one more way to dishonor God and to Use His name in vain. People say that and don’t even mean to swear.

(3) As in a court of Law, if we swear by “God”, it is God who may hold us accountable for those seemingly “harmless” oaths.

(4) Attempting to make our “word” more believable, because, perhaps our word often isn’t believable.

What is Jesus getting at, for us Today?

WHAT DO WE MAKE OF THIS LESSON?

Mat 5:37 ESV (37) Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

God wants our word to be our character

* As citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, we need not take an oath to make our word believable. We need not make a vow in order to cause others to believe whether or not what we say is true.

v.37) “Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No';

“Are you going to do what you said?” Simply Yes. NOT “I swear I will.” But simply and honestly, “Yes”. Or “No”. Our single word should be as believable as an oath. When a man was trustworthy, people used to say: “His word is His Bond.”

It meant that the person’s simple word, was believable, and could be

counted on.”

Is your word, believable, just as your word?

In the book of James, the words of Jesus are quoted.

Jas 5:12 ESV But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, **but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no,** so that you may not fall under condemnation.

That’s something worth working on. For the Child of God there should be no difference between an Oath, or a vow or swearing and a simple, “yes” or “no”. “His Word is His **BOND**” .

Honorable is the woman or the man or the young person – whose word is their bond. Blessed is the person whose word, expresses their inner most character and trust-worthiness.

For the child of God, and a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, there should be no need to swear an oath, so as to make our word really binding, as if otherwise, we couldn’t be trusted. Gods Kingdom of Heaven is Truth. Therefore those of us who are citizens of that Eternal kingdom; our words should always be yes, no, and always Truth. In so speaking, we are showing just a hint of what God’s Kingdom will be like in it’s fullness; nothing but truth and no need for Swearing or oath taking. Simply and honestly speaking Truth in faithfulness.

Ecc 5:4-6 ESV When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. (5) It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. (6) Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake.

CONCLUSION:

- 1) **Proverbs 25:14** A person who promises a gift but doesn’t give it is like clouds and wind that bring no rain. We should seek to be men or women of our word. A good reputation is dependent upon whether or not people can take you at your word and believe what you say.

Don't be someone who talks big or a lot, but whose words are empty and meaningless.

- 2) **Ecclesiastes 5:2** Don't make rash promises, and don't be hasty in bringing matters before God. After all, God is in heaven, and you are here on earth. So let your words be few.

Don't be quick to make rash promises you may not be able to keep.

Jas 4:13-15 ESV (13) Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"-- (14) yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. (15) Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."

"If the Lord Wills..." "Yes, I am planning on it" "I hope to be there". "If the Lord Wills it..." Let our "yes", be "YES!". And Let our "no", be NO!. Just that simple. Just that honorable. Just that Trustworthy.

Remember, an oath implies we are in control and are assured that we can make it happen. WE are not. "If the Lord Wills it", indicates that we acknowledge God is in control and that we have submitted and surrendered the outcome of our plans and commitments to Him. Let our yes, be YES. Let our no, be NO. And may all our words, speech, promises or intent of the heart reflect the character of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom of Heaven.

Psalms 15 (NLT) A psalm of David. ¹ Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD? Who may enter your presence on your holy hill? ² Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts. ³ Those who refuse to gossip, or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends. ⁴ Those who despise flagrant sinners, and honor the faithful followers of the LORD, and keep their promises even when it hurts.

SERIES: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way"

Oct.4, 2020

Sermon Title: "Law, Order & Justice"

TEXT: Mat. 5:38-42

REVIEW: THE LAW OF:

Acknowledge: The Law is God's Standard of Righteousness.

To Be Determined: How can this FOUNDATION OF THE OT LAW, point me toward ***God's Greater Grace***, through the FULFILLMENT of MY NT FAITH, ***in Christ's Redeeming Remedy?***

Mat 5:38-42 MKJV (38) **You have heard that it was said,** "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." (39) **But I say to you,** Do not resist evil. But whoever shall strike you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. (40) And to him desiring to sue you, and to take away your tunic, let him have your coat also. (41) And whoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two. (42) Give to him who asks of you, and you shall not turn away from him who would borrow from you.

REVIEW:

*** The Law is not something we can live up to,
but is that which we will be measured by.**

- 1)** The OT Law is the Foundation for our NT and the NT is the Fulfillment for our OT Foundation.
- 2)** The OT Law of God *presents* God's dealings with His people. Through it, we understand how things are intended to operate in God's Kingdom of Heaven and how we are to live as citizens of that Kingdom.
- 3)** The OT Law *establishes* the Standard of God's Righteousness and declares the absolute authority of God, as King of His eternal Kingdom.
- 4)** The OT Law *exalts* the Essence of God's holiness.
- 5)** The OT Law of God *illuminates* the unrighteousness of mankind.
- 6)** The OT Law *convicts* us of our need of a Savior and converts the heart
- 7)** The Law of God *directs* us to the coming Messiah.

- 8)** The OT Law is our *instruction* for worshipping God and gaining Wisdom for every area of human life.
- 9)** The OT Law *anticipates* God's calendar for the future, and reminds us of our past.
- 10)** The OT Law celebrates and magnifies the grace of God and drives us to humbly and gratefully, seek righteousness outside of ourselves.

INTRODUCTION:

When you hear "Law and Order and Justice", what comes to your mind? a TV program? The Wild west with sheriffs and gunfighters? Maybe you think of the challenges we are facing today in our nation.

"Law and Order" may cause us to think of the state of unrest in many of our larger cities. "Justice" may refer to moral justice, social justice, racial justice, economic justice or political justice. "Justice" is a little like "evangelical". It gets tagged onto just about everything, so that it kind of loses its clear meaning and winds up meaning nothing, really.

Today's lesson from Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount is focused on ***God's Grace being Greater, through Christ's Redeeming Remedy.*** And Jesus directs our focus toward.. **"LAW, ORDER & JUSTICE:"**

"Law" is the Standard of right and wrong that all people are held accountable to, not just a few.

"Order" is what is experienced when no offenses have occurred, because the law has been kept.

"Crime" is what takes place when someone breaks the standard.

So **"Order"** is **also** the orderly, appropriate and fair manner in which broken laws are addressed and amends are made between offended parties.

"Justice" therefore, is the overall process of upholding the law, keeping order and the balancing of the two, in a manner which renders

fair and equitable treatment of all people. I used to like to watch “America’s Most Wanted”, with John Walsh. They would highlight an unsolved case with a dramatization to let us see what they think happened. Then they would invite those watching the show to call into their HotLine if they had any leads or could give any clues on the case. Then at the end of the program they would give an update on one of the shows and the crime that was solved, and the bad guy that was caught, because some viewer called in with information. I loved that kind of resolution where the bad guy got caught. That was justice.

How you view justice, may depend on which side of the law you are on; whether you are the offender or the offended. If you are the one offended you may be quick to demand justice and make it harsh. Or if you are the offender, you may hope for justice to be carried out with much mercy and grace.

If we had no Law, there can be no such thing as a crime of offense, nor can there be any such thing as justice. Both Order and Justice are dependent upon a shared standard of laws.

NO Laws! Or Anarchy, may sound great to some. They can walk up to your house and take your things off your porch or drive away in your car and you might yell, “You can’t do that. That’s against the Law.” Then the Anarchist thief, yells, “Oh yes we can. Because we did away with the law. We have declared “there are no laws.” Then - that becomes the new law – that there are no laws.

Their law, being “no Law”, which becomes the “new law”.

And that works great as long as you, as the Anarchist - or are on the receiving end of that lawlessness. But once someone comes to your house, and walks away with your things – it becomes a different story. Then you go to his house and take back his stuff and what he took from you and also, just to teach him a lesson, you torch his house.

Law is broken or a person is offended; then in return a person may force

the person to pay for what they've done, but instead of matching what they did to you, you bump it up and it escalates. And then restitution turns into revenge, with a stiffer and much harsher consequences. Someone breaks the windows of your house. Then you retaliate by breaking their windows and torching their house. And before you know it: a war is born. BTW, that would be a sign of strained neighborly relations.

JESUS GIVES US A TIMELY LESSON ON JUSTICE THAT WE ALL NEED TO LEARN.

* In His Sermon on the Mount, and the character of the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus raises the issue of the OT Law and the topic of "Justice."

Mat 5:38-42 MKJV **(38) You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."** **(39) But I say to you, Do not resist evil.** But whoever shall strike you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. **(40)** And to him desiring to sue you, and to take away your tunic, let him have your coat also. **(41)** And whoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two. **(42)** Give to him who asks of you, and you shall not turn away from him who would borrow from you.

The Letter of the OT Law or the Foundation of the Law is eye for an eye.... Justice. The Spirit of the OT Law or the NT Fulfillment is Grace – But I say to you.... be gracious. Well-meaning Restitution for offenses, can too easily turn into opportunities for personal, hateful Revenge. And what God meant for good, the devil can use for evil, if we allow him to. One way to end a war is for one side to stop retaliating and offer forgiveness.

Justice: Treat others as they have treated you.

Does that sound right to you? In that case, justice would not be served, but more likely revenge will be taken, and likely more severely that it was given. If Justice is carried out individually, we would tend to cause things to escalate. So true justice is based on cultural standards, enforced by the larger "system", rather than the person or individual offended

The Golden Rule

Mat 7:12 ESV "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

We might call that the ***Gracious Golden Rule***. This is a principle that, if we learned it and lived by it; has the capability of changing the entire world. The Golden Rule is how individuals are to treat one another.

Restitution & Revenge:

Justice and treatment that matched the crime/sin

Mat 5:38-42 MKJV (38) You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

Lev 24:18-20 ESV (18) Whoever takes an animal's life shall make it good, life for life. (19) If anyone injures his neighbor, as he has done it shall be done to him, (20) fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him.

An eye for an eye, is people getting treated the way they treated you, **The Restitution is intended to match the offense.** Biblically it was intended to amount to a returning of the property or action toward the person offended. It was based on restitution or payment. And the punishment was to match the crime.

At first it seems that a person could conceivably break a law and steal something and possibly get away with it. And if he didn't get away with it, he only had to pay it back if he got caught. No big risk because you just might get away with it.

But according to the chapter as a whole, this interchange is to be public. This was to prohibit personal law enforcement or vengeance, or from progressing from restitution and becoming personal revenge.

So this justice was to be carried out before the judges, before the people, before family and friends and the community. If someone blasphemed the name of the Lord, the entire congregation was to stone him. If one

took the life of another, the congregation of Israelites took the life of the killer. This was not mob mentality, but the law being enforced by the community and not the individual.

If a man injured his neighbor, the people of Israel were the court and they would return the treatment to the person who injured his neighbor. If a man broke the bone of another man, if someone put out someone's eye or knocked out a tooth,- whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him; and done so by those in the camp, or the congregation of the people of Israel. Based on the standard of the law, justice was carried out by the community and not by the individual who had initially been offended.

It was public and it was meant to keep the Restitution of Justice, from becoming Personal Revenge.

This was the letter of the Law. This was the FOUNDATION of the OT Law, and how justice carried out the balancing of Law and Order

But Jesus didn't come to proclaim the Law or to abolish the Law but to FULFILL the Law. Jesus shares the Spirit of the Law.

This is the timely lesson of justice that we all need to learn.

LET GOD'S GRACE BE GREATER THAN THE OFFENSE ***God's Grace being Greater, through Christ's Redeeming Remedy.***

And he calls to the church, to rise to the challenge of not being so quick to demand justice, but to consider being gracious, as Christ was gracious. As Jesus hung crucified on the cross, perfectly righteous and perfectly sinless of his own doings; HE didn't hang there and pray, "Father... Let 'em have it. Both barrels. Give them double portion of what they have given me." "Its clobbering time!"

Instead he prayed; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." That was not a demand for justice but a plea for mercy on behalf of those who, unjustly, had just nailed Him to a cross.

Allow the Grace of God to direct you

Mat 5:38-42 MKJV (38) You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." (39) But I say to you, Do not resist evil. But whoever shall strike you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. (40) And to him desiring to sue you, and to take away your tunic, let him have your coat also. (41) And whoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two. (42) Give to him who asks of you, and you shall not turn away from him who would borrow from you.

But I say to you, Do Not resist the evil one. Literally it means: not to oppose an evil person or to refrain from engaging an evil, angry, violent person. Don't contend with an evil, angry or violent person on their level, but be gracious. That means no "Steven Segal, Jean Claude Van Damm, Johnny Rambo, or Josie Wales."

* This goes against all that is within a person. The knee jerk reaction might be to immediately respond by hitting the person who hit you. That would be personal justice but no proper Biblical justice. Or insulting the person who insulted you, or belittling the person who belittled you. As Christians, it seems like "verbal justice" is pretty much condoned as acceptable "verbal" eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth – or insult for insult. This would be a recipe for a brawl, or even fighting with our words.

What is a child of God and a citizen of the kingdom of heaven to do in this situation? In Scripture we are told that as Jesus was insulted, he did not return the insult. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. (1Pet.2:23) Instead Jesus "continued entrusting himself to Him who judges justly."

Be gracious

* Be Meek; Be Slow to anger. Be restrained from personal retaliation or escalation.

Mat 5:38-42 MKJV (38) You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." (39) But I say to you, Do not resist

evil. But whoever shall strike you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. (40) And to him desiring to sue you, and to take away your tunic, let him have your coat also. (41) And whoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two. (42) Give to him who asks of you, and you shall not turn away from him who would borrow from you.

Jesus was full of “grace and Truth”, emphasis today on the “grace”.

“Turn the other cheek” or be so characterized by Jesus Christ that we don’t engage in the violence; that we don’t pursue to repay; that we don’t seek personal retribution and violence.

How many of us could do that? Who has that within themselves to act in such a manner? How should we act? Justice and Restitution? Maybe.

Revenge? Never! Gracious? Always!

Rom 12:17 ESV Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

To “Turn the other cheek”, is about being gracious and “going the extra mile.” Going above and beyond the call of duty, in the name of Jesus, for the sake of the Kingdom and for the Glory of God.

IF we have problems with this, I’d like to encourage us to meditate on:

Rom 12:18-21 ESV (18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, **live peaceably** with all. (19) Beloved, **never avenge yourselves**, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." (20) To the contrary, "if your **enemy is hungry, feed him**, if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.")

Prov.25:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Finish this statement: “If you enemy hungers _____.” In wartime, we’d probably say, “If your enemy hungers, **let him starve!**” That’s what war is about isn’t it? Defeating the enemy” right?

But if we are becoming like Christ we would say; “If your enemy hungers, **feed him**.” Be gracious to her. Perhaps do what it would take in

order to be at peace with the one whom you perceive as an enemy. Be Gracious, helpful, even encouraging. If she is hungry, then feed her.

B E GENEROUS

* George Sweeting used to say: “Never squelch a generous impulse”.

What is a law suit, but perhaps someone seeking justice?

Mat 5:38-42 MKJV (38) You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." (39) But I say to you, Do not resist evil. But whoever shall strike you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. **(40) And to him desiring to sue you, and to take away your tunic, let him have your coat also.** (41) And whoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two. (42) Give to him who asks of you, and you shall not turn away from him who would borrow from you.

What if we were more inclined to be peacemakers than to take someone to court? What if we gave good things to our enemies? What if we were kind and Kind, Gracious and Generous.?? What if we sacrificed and took the loss, rather than to have the name of our Lord Jesus be dishonored because of our actions?

Gracious and Generous:

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called Sons of God.(Mat.5:9)

How valuable is being a peacemaker to you? What is it worth to you? (v.40) Coat, is the inner garment, like a sweater; Cloak is the outer garment, more like an overcoat.

The character of Christ and of His kingdom, is peace and “Peacemakers”. Blessed are the peacemakers, because they reflect the character of our Lord Jesus and His eternal home in glory- ours, as well.

Hey, it doesn’t get any easier. The next one just keeps getting harder.

If you can avoid legal proceedings by attempting to work things out outside of court, it would be of benefit to all and a testimony of the King

of the kingdom of heaven as the Ruler of our hearts.

Notice the progression Jesus presents

* From withstanding, to actively helping.

Mat 5:38-42 MKJV (38) You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." (39) **But I say to you,** Do not resist evil. But whoever shall **STRIKE** you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. (40) And to him desiring to SUE you, and to take away your tunic, let him have your coat also. **(41) And whoever shall COMPEL you to go a mile, go with him two.** (42) Give to him who **ASKS** of you, and you shall not turn away from him who would borrow from you.

We tend to want to give people more harsh justice than what they may deserve. That is due to our fallen flesh nature that is still alive and well within each of us. But what if we were to practice being more gracious than justice oriented? What would we lose and what might be gained? What if we were more gracious toward our offenders than they deserved? What if we demonstrated the character of Christ and His kingdom, leaving them with a taste of the kingdom of heaven and perhaps a longing for it in its fullness.

What if we showed others what Jesus is really like?

(i.) Gracious to Generous (v.

It seems these scenarios become less and less adversarial. Less forceful action taken, gives way to more compassionate position. Strike (v39); Sue (v40); Compel (v41); **Asks (v42):** From meekness, self-Control, not resisting, to gracious, to generous, enduring unreasonable demands with a servants spirit.

About v.41, Albert Barnes makes this observation: this may be an allusion, probably, to the practice of the Romans and some Eastern nations, who, when government dispatches had to be forwarded, obliged the people not only to furnish horses and carriages, but to give personal attendance, often at great inconvenience, when required. But the thing

here demanded is **a readiness to submit to unreasonable demands** of whatever kind, rather than raise quarrels, with all the evils resulting from them. What follows is a beautiful extension of this precept.

(ii.) Generous to compassionate (v42)

Mat 5:41-42 MKJV (41) And whoever shall COMPEL you to go a mile, go with him two. (42) **Give to him who ASKS of you, and you shall not turn away from him who would borrow from you.**

Pro 19:17 ESV Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.

Psa 37:21 ESV The wicked borrows but does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives;

Pro 3:27 ESV Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

CONCLUSION:

From the Letter to the Spirit of the Law. From the OT Foundation, to the NT Fulfillment – how are we to live?

Q: How can this FOUNDATION OF THE LAW, point me toward **God's Greater Grace**, through the FULFILLMENT of MY FAITH, **in Christ's Redeeming Remedy**?

(1) Invite God to lessen our grip on the things of this world - to nurture a less possessive attitude toward earthly things that the Lord has provided; so that we see all that God has given us as tools and means to help others experience the grace and compassion of God's kingdom. . Giving, helping, Serving. All are ways we can help others experience a taste of the Kingdom of heaven on earth.

(2) Invite God to nurture A Meek spirit and slow to retaliate; This is an unusual trait for any human to possess. To display an interest and a willingness to help others in any area of need. To demonstrate a love for

heavenly treasures rather than an addition to earthly pleasures and possessions, is evidence that someone other than self, is in control.

(3) Seek to cultivate A caring and generous heart can be a testimony to others of a caring and generous God. If someone asks you for a ride to the store. Ask them if could pick them up again sometime. “You need \$20 for groceries? Are you sure that will be enough? How about \$40 worth just to be sure you and your family have enough?

It seems in our culture, we are only willing to do what is absolutely needed and no more. I have other things to do. My time is valuable. My hard earned money is for me.

(4) Pray God will open our eyes and hearts Anytime we have opportunity to demonstrate the character of Christ and of His kingdom – we can’t go wrong with that; provided we have that kind of character developed already.

Perhaps we should begin working on that, by first praying; “Oh God, make me more like my Lord Jesus; Lord nurture in me, the kind of person that can fulfill these challenges we learned today. For your kingdom sake.”

Help me to be genuinely just, but also to be more gracious and more generous in my dealings with others, especially toward those who are oppositional to me.

SERIES: SERMON ON THE MOUNT: "The Narrow Way"

Oct.11, 2020

Sermon Title: "LOVE FROM ABOVE, pt.1"

TEXT: Mat. 5:43-48

REVIEW: The Law of Love

To Be Determined: How can this FOUNDATION OF THE OT LAW, point me toward **God's Greater Grace**, through the FULFILLMENT of MY NT FAITH, **in Christ's Redeeming Remedy**?

REVIEW: The Law is not something we can live up to, but is that which we will be measured by.

- 1) The OT Law is the Foundation for our NT and the NT is the Fulfillment for our OT Foundation.
- 2) The OT Law of God *presents* God's dealings with His people. Through it, we understand how things are intended to operate in God's Kingdom of Heaven and how we are to live as citizens of that Kingdom.
- 3) The OT Law *establishes* the Standard of God's Righteousness and declares the absolute authority of God, as King of His eternal Kingdom.
- 4) The OT Law *exalts* the Essence of God's holiness.
- 5) The OT Law of God *illuminates* the unrighteousness of mankind.
- 6) The OT Law *convicts* us of our need of a Savior.
- 7) The Law of God *directs* us to the coming Messiah.
- 8) The OT Law is our *instruction* for worshipping God and gaining Wisdom for every area of human life.
- 9) The OT Law *anticipates* God's calendar for the future, and reminds us of our past.
- 10) The OT Law celebrates and magnifies the grace of God and drives us to humbly and gratefully, seek righteousness outside of ourselves.

Mat 5:38-48 ESV "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' (39) But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. (41) And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. (42) Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you."

(43) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' (44) But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, (45) so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (46) For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (47) And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? (48) You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

INTRODUCTION

I find it interesting that so much of this particular portion of the Sermon on the Mount, specifically focuses on human relations. Have you noticed that? This particular passage deals with how we view or treat our “enemies”. The last section focused on how we treat others, to whom we might wish to carry out personal revenge. Before this, Jesus focused on how our actions and the breaking of our marriage vows, affects our spouse. Before that it was lust and adultery, obviously affecting others. And before that, Jesus addressed the sin of anger toward others that is worthy of the same judgment as murder. Before that it was about people who take advantage of us and use us. All connected in various ways to how we relate to or retaliate toward those around us.

THE LAW OF LOVE & HATE?

(5:43-45)

This Section of persecution has a close lingering connection to the previous section on Justice and an eye for an eye in verses 5:38-42.

The Law of Love & Hate (v43)

Mat 5:43-44 ESV (43) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' (44) But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...

* Most humans don't have much problem fulfilling this law. Most of us are good at loving those who love us, and hating those who we perceive

as our enemies. That is the natural, human way. If not hate, then at least treating them disrespectfully; especially in the area of politics and elections, there are those we may love to hate.

Many read this and think, “something about that just doesn’t sound right.” And that would be correct. If you notice, as Jesus takes us through the Sermon on the Mount, He doesn’t actually say; “The OT Law states...”. But he states: “You have heard it said...” And with these statements Jesus addresses, anger, adultery, Divorce and many others that He doesn’t take time to address every one: -- these statements represent issues that are based on the OT Law of God, but have become twisted, perverted, misunderstood and misrepresented – from the religious leaders, to the people of God, who are dependent upon those religious leaders to understand and pass on to them. The Word, Law and Will of God is addressed and clarified in the Sermon on the Mount.

This Law Jesus refers to is where we get the 2nd Greatest Commandment, to Love you neighbor. And for the record the “Law” does not instruct hatred toward one’s enemies.

Lev 19:15-18 ESV "You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. (16) You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD. (17) "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, ^[Mat.5:22], but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. (18) You shall not take vengeance ^[Mat.5:38] or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

So the part of loving your neighbor, they got right. But where they get “Hate your enemies”, is anybody’s guess.

The Law and Assumptions. (5:43)

Love neighbor and hate your enemy?? Hard to find where the religious leaders would have come up with that one. Several commentaries tell us

that it became a teaching which was assumed; “Love your neighbor, which was accurate. They then concluded or assumed, then you should hate your enemies, which was unbiblical, but certainly caught on.

The OT Law of God deals largely with relations. How to treat one another when problems arise. And the OT Law is where the Greatest and 2nd greatest commandments originate.

Mat 5:43-44 ESV (43) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall **love your neighbor and hate your enemy.**' (44) **But I say to you,** Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...

So Jesus states: “*You have heard it said...*” referring to the misuse and misrepresentation of Holy Scripture, from the heart and mind of God, given to His people. With which he then follows with this statement: “*But I say to you...*”; basically stating, “Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Allow me to clear some things up for you...”.

The correct perspective on how we treat our enemies is also lined out in part in the OT Law.

Exo 23:4-5 ESV (4) "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. (5) If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him.

These acts or treatments of an enemy is the demonstration of God’s love, even in the Old Testament. In a sense we are instructed to treat our enemies according to the Golden Rule. Treat them as you would want your enemies to treat you.

So the Law of Love and Hate may appeal to our fleshly nature, but it is not Biblical and certainly not commanded.

Following this, Jesus addresses...

OUR IDENTITY AS CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (5:44-45)

Mat 5:43-44 ESV (43) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' (44) **But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...**

Loving your enemy displays the character of Christ and His Kingdom of Heaven. (5:44) It also is a visual declaration of the OT Law of God.

* Here Jesus gives correction to the whole "Law of Love and Hate".

(i.) Jesus instructs us to Love our enemy (v44)

Bless those who curse you. do good to those who hate you. Pray for those who mistreat or persecute you. You want to mess with somebody's mind; when someone is really mean or hateful or condescending or insulting; Compliment them. Point out something impressive about them.

If we need more understanding of how to love someone according to God's love, 1 Cor. 13:1-8 would be a good place to go to find out what Love really looks like. Kindness. Patience. Its being gracious, merciful, understanding and forgiving; respectful, or encouraging. Love is not referred to here as an emotion. Love is action; it is treatment. Perspective. Words, Actions. Attitudes.

(ii.) Pray for those who persecute you (v44b)

*Not that you become Sons of your father, by doing this, but that you become *known* as or *identified* as sons of your Father in heaven, because of these traits. "The Apple doesn't fall far from that tree." "Chip of the Almighty block". Jesus is stating, that the character and traits of our Lord Jesus and His Kingdom are to be displayed in us and should leave others with a taste of God's KoH.

If you want to Change your problems with others, Pray. Pray for them. And God may change you also, or at least change your attitude toward

them. This would be in regard to personal relations, or even Political candidates. If ever we needed to do this, it is today.

God's grace is experienced by all. (v45)

Mat 5:44-45 ESV " (44) But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, (45) so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. **For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust**

God is gracious to all, doesn't mean all are saved. But His grace is available to all, and His "general" grace is given to all people.

(i.) Our Identity (v.45a)

* A gracious lifestyle doesn't make us children of the KoH, but it does help *identify us as* citizens of the KoH.

(ii.) Our Example (v45b)

All people receive rain and sunshine; they are able to sow and harvest. In general, all people are blessed with health, automobiles, houses, jobs, food, clothing, air to breath, etc. God is gracious to all. God is even good and gracious to pagan unbelievers. All people. HE even withholds judgment in order to allow for repentance.

If God Himself is gracious towards those who reject Him, why should we feel it is beyond us to be gracious towards those who abuse, reject or persecute us? Or even those who disagree with us? Such as family members, coworkers, neighbors or politicians or those of a particular political party.

If Jesus prayed for His persecutors: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.?" – Should we not likewise, be able to be gracious toward our "enemies" and be genuinely and fervently praying for them? Loving our enemies is all about, our identity as true followers of Christ, who have a different reason for living and a Christ-like manner in which we are supernaturally able to treat abusive people differently; even love them. It reflects our true identity and it reveals our heavenly example.

Be gracious to all. In so doing, it will let others know who we belong to and who we are following.

WE HAVE A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIVING (5:45-48)

* We don't merely have a different reason for living, but we put that into practice by demonstrating we have a different way of living; or treating others. And this, Scripture says, will set us apart, in the eyes of the on looking world.

Living like the King of the KoH (v46)

Mat 5:46-48 ESV (46) *For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (47) And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? (48)* You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

(i.) Love the loveable; be friendly to the friendly (v46)

If we live like that then we're just living like the rest of the fallen sinful, unredeemed world around us.

(ii.) Tax collectors and gentiles

But children of God and citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, with Jesus Christ as our Identity and our Example - are not to be commended for living as children of the kingdom of darkness.

The Apple and the Tree (v47)

* Be like your Father in heaven. We are to be commended if we live as children of the Kingdom of Light, representing our King of Light, through our **Attitudes, Behavior and Choices.**

Mat 5:46-48 ESV (46) For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (47) And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? (48) **You therefore must**

be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Be Like your Father in Heaven (5:45)

Unless Your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven (5:20)

You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. (5:48)

Once again, the Law of God, while requiring perfect righteousness, heavenly perfection and God likeness; also magnifies and celebrates the Grace of God; that in our imperfectness, He demonstrates His perfection. In our Unrighteousness, He imparts to us His all-sufficient righteousness. In our unloving attitudes, His love is abounding and is able to love others through us.

This is the “Love from Above”. If Jesus is ruling over us; if we are genuinely filled with God’s Holy Spirit and He is controlling us; then He can and will love others Supernaturally, through us.

CONCLUSION:

Individual, circumstances in our nation, our jobs, politics, elections – can cause us to hate those whom we perceive as our “enemy”.

(1) Humbly ask God to make our character to reflect the character of Christ and His eternal Kingdom. Be consumed with this prayer. Expect God to answer by considering; “How does He want to change me?”

(2) Pray for those whom you consider to be your enemy. Look for ways to bless those who are cursing you. Look for ways to encourage those who are discouraging you. Look for ways to respect those who are disrespecting you.

(3) Invite God to make you perfect as He is perfect. “God I invite you to fill me with your “Love from Above”. “Fill me with your perfect love, so that I may love others as you do. Bless me to leave others with a lasting taste of your eternal kingdom to come.

In Closing: Here is the summary of the main points of this booklet.

- 1)** The OT Law is the Foundation for our NT and the NT is the Fulfillment for our OT Foundation.
- 2)** The OT Law of God *presents* God's dealings with His people. Through it, we understand how things are intended to operate in God's Kingdom of Heaven and how we are to live as citizens of that Kingdom.
- 3)** The OT Law *establishes* the Standard of God's Righteousness and declares the absolute authority of God, as King of His eternal Kingdom.
- 4)** The OT Law *exalts* the Essence of God's holiness.
- 5)** The OT Law of God *illuminates* the unrighteousness of mankind.
- 6)** The OT Law *convicts* us of our need of a Savior and converts the heart
- 7)** The Law of God *directs* us to the coming Messiah.
- 8)** The OT Law is our *instruction* for worshipping God and gaining Wisdom for every area of human life.
- 9)** The OT Law *anticipates* God's calendar for the future, and reminds us of our past.
- 10)** The OT Law celebrates and magnifies the grace of God and drives us to humbly and gratefully, seek righteousness outside of ourselves.

I hope you have found this study of "The Value of the Old Testament Law of God, in the Life of the Present Day Believer in Jesus Christ" a helpful tool to allow you to consider the balanced Truth of the whole of Scripture. The Old Testament as the foundation of the New Testament and the New Testament as the Fulfillment of the Old Testament. Both are uniquely invaluable, yet both must be inseparable.

Also, the Old Testament quotes in the New Testament, don't merely make the OT foundational to the NT, but also causes the NT to be dependent upon the OT. Though they are each uniquely distinct,

nevertheless they are mutually inseparable.

Apart from the Old Testament, we couldn't have the New Testament. Apart from the New Testament we would still be without God's only Son as our only Savior.

How crucial is the whole counsel of God for us today, both New Testament as well as the Old Testament.

We hope you are trusting firmly and fully in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior.

And please check out the rest of our free downloadable resources presented at the end of this booklet.

God's blessings to you in Christ Jesus our Lord

Don't close this booklet yet

without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior or *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; --

Rom 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness
can only come from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten
Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but
have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins
and sent Him to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus
Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still
sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he
gave the right to become children of God,

- John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you are
truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins and
citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

The ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. He already knows. Also Confess Jesus as you LORD. He desires and deserves to be your Lord.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:

Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

*It is our prayer that you find **Jesus Christ** to be...*

*your highest calling,
your greatest purpose,
your soul's source and joy,
and your all-consuming passion.*

May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.

-- Downloadable free resources at: www.christefca.org --

Christ E Free Church, 19682 Hill Rd., PO Box 619 Saegertown Pa 16433

www.ChristEFCA.org (814) 763-2934 ChristEFree@gmail.com

1 PETER, (5Vols): *Suffering in Sojourning / The Church God Always Wanted*
 A NEW CREATION: *Beginning Your New Life In Christ*
 ADVENT: *The Submission of Christ*
 ADVENT 2018: *Why Was Jesus Born? J.E.S.U.S.*
 AMERICA ADRIFT: *A Culture in Crisis and the Challenges Before the Church*
 BALANCING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: (2VOL) *Growing together in the Basics*
 CHALLENGES OF FAITH FROM CHARACTERS IN THE BIBLE: *Life Struggles of Real People in the Bible*
 CHRIST'S COMING KINGDOM: *What Will Be Will Be*
 ADVENT STORY BOOK: *Children's Story and coloring book for Christmas*
 CPR Evangelism: *Helping others Step from Death to Life*
 DRAWING NEARER: *Purposeful Steps Toward The Next Level of Spiritual Growth*
 DISCIPLING A COMMUNITY: *Your life is like a stone in the water: What Affect will You Have?*
 EASTER STORY BOOK: *Children's Story and Coloring book for Holy Week*
 ETERNITY: *What Will It Really Be Like?*
 EVIDENCE OF GOD IN COUNTRY: *Proof through our documents, monuments and edifices*
 FACING THE FLAWS OF OUR INNER WORLD: (2Vol) *Starving the Old, Nurturing the New*
 GIFTS AND FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: *A Match Made in Heaven*
 GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR THE FAMILY: *The Intelligent Divine Design*
 GROWING THROUGH GRIEF: *When Pain Won't End and Hope Seems Lost*
 HOLY WEEK 2011: *Questions About Christ and His Resurrection?*
 HOLY WEEK 2012: *Questions about Life and Death? How Dead Will we Really Be?*
 HOLY WEEK 2016: *Events Surrounding the Passion Week*
 HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD! *Knowing and Growing in Experiencing God*
 IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ALMIGHTY: *Life Transforming Prayer & Communion*
 IN THE SHADOW OF THE SHEPHERD: *Sheep Becoming Like the Servant Shepherd*
 INTERESTS AND INQUIRIES: *Curious Cultural Concerns for The Future*
 JAMES (4Vol): *Faith That Makes A Difference*
 IS THERE A GOD? *Christian Tract, Asking Questions.*
 JUDE: (2Vol) *STANDING FIRM, When the Rest of the World is Falling Away.*
 KISS: *Kingdom Impact Saturation Strategy*
 KINGDOM VISION: *Seeing the World and God's Kingdom as God does*
 LAW OF GOD AND THE CHRISTIAN: *The Value of the OT Law in the life of the NT Christian*
 LIFE/GROUP INFO: *Christian recovery or re-entry format & Bible discussion*
 LIFE MATTERS: *What It Means for Others To See Jesus In You*
 MAKING LIFE WORK (2Vol): *Discovering Your God Focused Purpose in Living*
 MALACHI: *God's Book of Secrets*
 MISSIONS INTRO: *DIRTY DISCIPLESHIP: Preparing the Soil / Heart, for the Seed / Word.*
 MISSIONS 2016: *THE MINISTRY OF JONAH and God's Heart for the Nations.*
 MISSIONS 2017: *IN YOUR GOING - Some Supernatural Elements in the Early Church*
 MISSIONS AT HOME: *"YOUR LIFE IS LIKE..." The Challenge to Disciple A Community*
 MISSIONS: *100 Years: So Where Are We Now?*
 MORE THAN CONQUERORS: *Shaking Off the Shackles of Defeated Christianity*
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 THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL (2VOLS): *...Good News, of Great Joy, for All Peoples*
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 WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER (2VOL): *Handbook & Guide for PreMarriage Consideration*



May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.

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